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Relax! The assessment process is not as bad as you think!

PPC116

PROTECT AND SURVIVE

...or how to stop worrying and love your PPE



PROFESSIONAL PEST CONTROLLER AUGUST 2024
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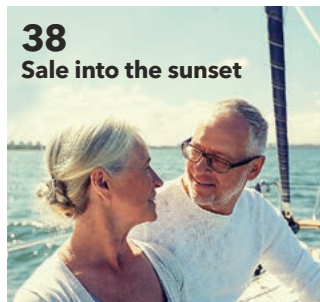
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The sun will come out... tomorrow?

The weather's awful. The wasps never arrived. England (and Scotland) lost the Euros. And glue board licences... well, we'll talk about those later.

It's been a strange summer so far. Someone online said they were glad that we'd had fewer wasps this year so they could instead focus on their contract clients, getting new work, and their work/life balance - so maybe a disappointing wasp season is just a matter of perspective?

For us, the elections slammed the brakes on our lobbying efforts for better glue board licences.

We've ended up with a mix of wins and losses. As with much of our work, some of it hit home, and we've seen real tangible changes to legislation in England and Scotland.

Whether or not that creates workable glue board licence schemes that protect public health is yet to be seen.

The unveiling of our manifesto will help us stay focused on our lobbying work. We now have an entirely new government to influence, so we're rolling up our sleeves and heading back to Westminster with new goals.

We must now move past being 'those noisy glue board guys' and put public health pest management on government agendas.

BPCA's team is set for a busy summer – we're investigating the industry's recruitment issues, developing our qualification framework, and offering members new benefits, events and CPD resources.

We're also approaching the end of our current strategy and establishing our big-ticket items for the next several years while wrapping up many current projects so they become part of the 'day job'.

Although the summer has been full of change and several disappointments, BPCA is making plans for the future of our sector. We're working with our many volunteers to ensure that we continue to REPRESENT, SUPPORT, and ASSURE the industry so you can all continue to have profitable businesses, healthy staff and happy customers.

Whatever the weather, have a great summer!

Scott + Dee

PPC editors
hello@bpca.org.uk

ACCIDENTAL COMPETITION SEES PPC TRAVEL!

We seem to have accidentally created a staff competition for photos of us reading #PPC magazine on holiday. Who did it better?

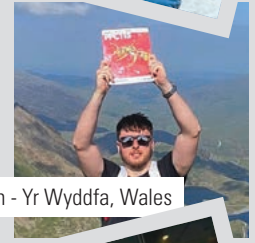
Send in your picture and it might feature in the next PPC hello@bpca.org.uk



Lorraine - Niagara, Canada



Clare - Hellesylt, Norway



Harrison - Yr Wyddfa, Wales



Emily - Wimbledon, London



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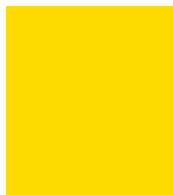
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PPC has been printed using carbon-balanced papers, showing our commitment to choosing a sustainable supply chain and reducing our carbon footprint with each edition.



BPCA Registered CPD points
Online CPD quiz = 1 point each

Remember to log anything else you've learned in your CPD diary for even more points. bpca.org.uk/add

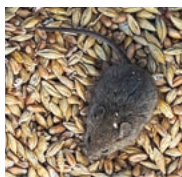


Basis Prompt point allocation
Reading PPC mag = 2 points
Online CPD quiz = 1 point each
bpca.org.uk/find-cpd

NEW CLIENT DOCUMENT EXPLAINS GLUE TRAPS (OFFENCES) ACT

BPCA has released a document explaining the implications of the Glue Trap (Offences) Act 2022 to clients.

The document was created with the support of Orkin UK



and is now available to download in the member library.

BPCA Chief Exec Ian Andrew said: "While we're still working on influencing the licensing scheme, the election complicated speaking with ministers.

"We've put together the following guidance to support members with having conversations with their clients.

"We encourage members and their clients to continue to contact us with their concerns regarding glue boards so we can continue to lobby the government on your behalf."

The BPCA member library contains hundreds of useful documents and templates exclusively for BPCA members (login required) bpca.org.uk/library

TACKLE BEHAVIOURAL RESISTANCE IN MICE

BPCA and Wade Environmental, a BPCA consultant member, are urging pest professionals across the UK to report any current behavioural issues observed in house mice (*Mus musculus*).

BPCA aims to gather and analyse data on behavioural resistance in house mice. This project will explore how such resistance manifests and develop effective strategies to manage it. Additionally, BPCA hopes to start mapping behavioural resistance across the UK.

If you are interested in contributing to this vital project, which aims to create industry-wide benefits, please complete this pre-screening form. This form ensures that your site, activities, and commitment are suitable for the project.

Complete the survey here: bit.ly/3zGtm0W

Note that any information you provide will be shared with BPCA and Wade Environmental.

FICAM D WITHDRAWN FROM THE MARKET

The phase-out for Bendiocarb, the active ingredient in Ficam D, has now begun. The product can no longer be purchased as of 29 July 2024.

If you already purchased Ficam D before this date, you can still use it up until 25 January 2025, after which you will need to safely dispose of any remaining stock.

Why is Ficam D being shelved?

Last year, Envu UK announced the withdrawal of Ficam D (Bendiocarb) from the market due to 'regulatory measures'.

For over forty years, the product has been used as a control method against wasps, hornets and ants.

Envu said that in recent years there have been "significant assessments and investments, including changes to the product labelling in 2020, to keep the product available for pest professionals."

However, new BPR registration rules following Brexit have now made it very difficult for them to keep products such as Ficam D on the market.

If you have any questions around the phase-out of Bendiocarb or the withdrawal of Ficam D, get in touch with our technical team and we'll get the answers for you technical@bpca.org.uk



PEST SOLUTIONS LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS RODENT-FRIENDLY LITTER

Pest Solutions launched a litter purge in June to tackle the growing amount of rubbish in towns and cities across the UK, which contributes to the rise of rodents and other pests in businesses and homes, creating what is becoming a public health emergency.

To lead the way in tackling the litter problem and encouraging others to follow suit, members of the Pest Solutions team will allocate one day per month to clearing up litter and cleaning different problematic areas, in and around locations where they are based in the UK.

Members of the Glasgow team recently took part in their first litter picking day, collecting and clearing over 60 large bags of litter from the side of busy roads surrounding their Kinning Park headquarters. However, the litter often returns overnight, and Pest Solutions believes more resources and education to change the mindset of those doing the littering is required if real change is to be made.

The more litter on the streets, the greater the risk to public health across the UK. With public services

struggling in difficult financial circumstances, pest levels continue to rise, particularly rodents.

Chris Cagienard, Managing Director at Pest Solutions and President of British Pest Control Association, said: "The litter on our streets is not only a blight on our society but it attracts rats to our homes, businesses and playgrounds. As pest controllers, litter is one of our main challenges. Litter isn't just unsightly; it is dangerous because it attracts rodents and other pests and makes getting rid of them even more difficult."

Ian Andrew, CEO at British Pest Control Association, added: "There is an inextricable link between litter and pests, that is clear. More rubbish, particularly foodstuffs, supports pest activity, and especially rodent infestations. It's not just an environmental matter, but a public health issue. Rats in particular carry many diseases which can be easily spread to humans. BPCA is fully supportive of Pest Solutions' campaign and urges everyone to play their part in tackling the UK's litter crisis."



NEW MEMBERS

Full servicing members

- ADS Integrated Pest Management, Berkshire
- Arrest The Pest, Gloucestershire
- Best Pest Control, Bristol
- Canterbury Pest Control, Kent
- Eoccare Pest Management, London
- Evoque Pest Control, Bedfordshire
- Irwin M&E Ltd, County Armagh
- Jack Russell Environmental, Lincolnshire
- Kaizen Pest Solutions, London
- Pest & Property Solutions Ltd, South Glamorgan
- Proof It Solutions, Hertfordshire
- Removapest, Leicestershire
- Ripley Pest Management, County Tyrone
- Siniyon Environmental Solutions, Warwickshire
- Squeak-A-Boo Pest Management, Somerset
- TNR Pest Solutions, South Glamorgan
- Trickey Pest Control, Devon
- Valour Services, London
- West Lancashire Borough Council, Lancashire

Observer members

- Accopna Facility Service Middle East, Qatar
- Bestcare Company, Saudi Arabia
- DANAH Integrated Facility Management (DIFM), Saudi Arabia
- Dream Middle East Company, Saudi Arabia
- Pest Solutions Dublin, County Dublin

BPCA REPRESENTS THE UK AT THE GLOBAL PEST MANAGEMENT COALITION AND GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY SUMMIT

BPCA Chief Executive Ian Andrew recently attended the Global Pest Management Coalition meeting in Miami Beach, coinciding with World Pest Day and the GPMC's

Global Public Health and Food Safety Summit.

Delegates from across Europe, North and South America, North Africa, and Asia came together to highlight global collaboration in pest management. Members of the coalition shared how each country was marking World Pest Day, including setting up press conferences, social media campaigns, and working to share a united message of the industry's importance.

Other items discussed include further engagement with the World Health Organisation on vector-borne diseases and an update on the GPMC's Sustainability Working Group (BPCA's Natalie Bungay participates).

World Pest Day around the world
ANCPUAC (Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Panama) hosted a multi-day event to celebrate and recognise the importance of World Pest Day.

ADEPAP (Catalonia) held a formal press conference to discuss the importance of pest management and its role in protecting public health.

Maldives and Sri Lanka organised a beach cleanup to promote community support and environmental protection.

France set up two separate media opportunities to communicate the value and importance of pest management.

AD3P (Morocco) utilised NPMA media assets and shared a video outlining the importance of pest management.

BPCA (UK) ran a digital forum for World Pest Day, which attracted over 200 participants worldwide.

CEPA (Europe) conducted media outreach and shared information to enhance public awareness of World Pest Day and highlight the role of pest management professionals as protectors of public health.

At the Global Summit

The summit featured a diverse range of topics, thoroughly exploring all aspects of pest management, including:

- Professor Faith Oi, on the biotic and abiotic factors influencing pest distribution
 - Fernando Petri, Royal Canin, on pest risks in the food manufacturing process
 - Hakan Kjellberg, Anticemex, on using and interpreting remote sensing data
 - Marc Aubry, Ecolab and Daniel Baldwin, Hawx Pest Control, on the complexities of pest management in food processing and distribution
 - Grant Welton, PepsiCo, on pest management in hospitality
 - Earl Arnold, AIB, on pest management from an auditor's perspective
 - Claudia, Riegel, City of New Orleans Mosquito, Termite and Rodent Control Board on the city-wide approach to pest management
 - Professor Coby Schal on pest-associated biocontaminants to human health impacts
 - Natalie Bungay, BPCA and AJ Treleven, Sprague Pest solutions, on environmental sustainability.
- Ian said: "The highlight for me was the session on the City of New Orleans's pest management after Hurricane Katrina. This led to an integrated city-wide approach with increased monitoring, identification of 'hot spots' and coordinated control measures to achieve maximum impact".

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JOHN O'CONNOR 'BEE PART OF IT' PROJECT MAKES A BUZZ IN LETCHWORTH

BPCA member John O'Conner Pest Control and Grounds Maintenance divisions have joined forces to work on an exciting project in Letchworth, collaborating with North Herts Council.

Their 'Bee Part Of It' initiative began with a simple vision by Karen, the Pest Control Manager at John O'Conner, to establish a couple of bee hives on their premises.

However, upon conducting preliminary research, Karen quickly realised that the local area lacked sufficient food sources to sustain an increased bee population.

Recognising this gap, Karen collaborated with Gareth Towson, the Grounds Maintenance Manager, to conceive a more comprehensive approach.

A project for the whole community

Karen said: "We collaborated with North Herts Council to plant bee-friendly plants on the UK's First Roundabout, creating a 'bee corridor' through the middle of Letchworth.

"To further support the bees, we have also worked with residents to introduce wildflower and bee-friendly plants in their gardens.

"It's not just residents who have embraced



this new initiative; local businesses, pubs, scout groups, schools and community garden groups have been involved".

'Bee Part of It' day

In April 2024, John O'Conner organised a 'Bee Part of It' event, during which they undertook guerilla planting and helped local children make bee bombs, bee hotels, and bee watering stations to take home and put in their own gardens.

Other notable participants included local community gardens, which provided bee-friendly plants, and the North Herts Beekeeping Association, which offered invaluable educational resources about bees.

Chris Mercer, Executive Committee Member of Hertfordshire Beekeepers Association, commented: "This was a fantastic initiative for bees and all insects. It will be wonderful for our local ecosystem and the wellbeing of the people who are living within the bee corridor."

Reach out

Do you have a community initiative you want to share with the readership of PPC? Send us your stories!

hello@bpca.org.uk

"It will be wonderful for our local ecosystem and the wellbeing of the people who are living within the bee corridor."

HOME SWEET HOME?

Glenn Zealand and Steve Fletcher from ZF Pest Management Services, sent us these snaps of this unusual nesting location at one of their large sites in Grimsby.



Glenn said: "We took a site on and found these eggs in one of the rodent monitors. What a strange place to nest!

"We put some signage on the station to let site staff know to stay away from the box. We were unsure at first what species of bird had nested here, but on our follow-up visit, we saw a robin on top of the monitor, so we presume this is the mother."



Send your snaps

Send us your pest-related pics, and we might feature them in the next issue of PPC magazine.

hello@bpca.org.uk

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We just got shortlisted for the National Pest Awards! It's the first time we've entered any awards and been

shortlisted as a finalist. I was encouraged by a friend, it being one of those things you just do with no expectations – and now I want to win! Win or not, being a finalist is truly humbling and thought this was perhaps a bit of news to share with my extended pestie family at BPCA.

Thanks to you all at BPCA, and some friends I've made at other pest control companies, for your ongoing support. I would never have got here without it. A true team effort between my company and support from other BPCA members (they know who they are!).

Michelle Pope

MP Environmental Pest Control

**NATIONAL
PEST AWARDS
— 2024 —**

PESTS IN THE PRESS: MARCH TO JUNE 2024



Early April saw a burst of broadcast activity after BPCA was once more invited to comment on 'ratflation' figures provided by insurer Direct Line.

With appearances on radio and television, BPCA's Natalie Bungay had an entire day booked out for 'ratflation' interviews, with several more coming in over the following days and weeks.

BPCA's position as the voice of authority for the sector is reflected by the media enquiries received weekly from print, online, radio and television journalists and programme-makers including BBC Breakfast, BBC Radio 4, iNews, The Mirror and The Sunday Telegraph.

Online and in print, a warning to be wary of gulls during breeding season proved popular, featuring in multiple titles – and even ending up in the satirical Facebook group Angry People in Local Newspapers.

Articles highlighting invasive species week and adult moth emergence helped spread the message that BPCA members have a wide and varying skill set. Targeted work in support of BPCA's lobbying efforts included a press release highlighting the concerns around the government's proposed glue board licensing scheme.

Our 'seven springtime tasks' release also reminded householders of simple steps they can take to help prevent pest issues.

In June, BPCA issued a press release linking to its manifesto and setting out its key policy demands ahead of the General Election.

Read all about it!

Spot something in the press? Idea for a press release? Tell us.

hello@bpca.org.uk

TOP 3 HEADLINES

ARE YOU ALLOWED TO HIT A SEAGULL IF IT TRIES TO STEAL YOUR FOOD?



BRITS ARE ONLY JUST REALISING WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CATCHING GREY SQUIRRELS – AND IT'S DARK



BRITAIN'S PEST PROBLEM: IN PLACES WHERE SOCIETY FAILS, VERMIN FLOURISH



TOTAL ARTICLES TO-DATE 2,204

TOTAL CIRCULATION 2024 252,987,027



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BPCA SUPPORTS MIND WITH PAYBACK DAY



Back in spring, the BPCA team helped with a community allotment run by the mental health charity Mind. We had a great time supporting the volunteers and service users! Here are some of our favourite pictures snapped on the day.



Every work of art
in the kitchen,
comes from
the care
of food hygiene



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PESTS IN POLITICS: JANUARY TO MARCH 2024

BPCA's Fight for Practical Glue Board Licensing

We find ourselves at a crucial juncture in the fight to protect food security, public health and vulnerable members of society. Recent plans to license the use of glue boards for pest control, announced by Defra, present significant challenges that cannot be overlooked.

We recently expressed our grave concerns in a letter to Steve Barclay MP, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. In our letter, we urged for a delay in the implementation of the new licensing scheme to allow for proper engagement with the professional pest management community and to better protect public health.

Our Chief Executive, Ian Andrew, has been outspoken about the potential consequences of the licensing scheme. He has described it as "ill-thought-out" and likely to result in "disease, distress and business closures". Many essential businesses, such as supermarkets, restaurants, takeaways and hotels, would be excluded from consideration for a license under the current plan.

Minister acts on some points

Recent updates from Defra, following directives from Minister Pow, have brought some changes. The licences will now include national and regional distributors for food manufacturing facilities.

Minister Pow has also recognised that, on rare occasions, establishments like pubs, restaurants, supermarkets or hotels might need immediate action to tackle infestations. Despite these changes, Defra has reiterated that individual licences will only be issued in exceptional circumstances when no satisfactory alternatives are available.

Modifications are not enough so far

While we appreciate these adjustments, they do not go far enough. As Ian Andrew stated, "While we're pleased that Minister Pow has finally acknowledged our concerns, we don't believe these changes go far enough.

"We'd have liked to see the class licences expanded to include all food sites so pest professionals could continue to rapidly protect public health, without waiting many days for their individual licences to be approved by Natural England."

Businesses will likely face closures for several days to ensure customer safety, and the high costs of these licenses could make it difficult for smaller businesses to afford the necessary protection. The licensing process could take up to 15 days, leading to prolonged closures or hazardous conditions for consumers.

Each deployment of glue boards, once permitted, could cost around £2,500.

The risk of rodent infestations does not end once food leaves the production facility. These risks remain as food moves through the supply chain. It is unfair and impractical to expect small local food production businesses to have any less protection than large national companies.

Moreover, the lack of provision for glue board treatments in homes, even in the most dangerous situations, is a serious oversight. Vulnerable people in England could be forced to live with severe rodent infestations for weeks while other control methods take effect. These plans put the welfare of rats and mice above human health and safety.

Current state of play

The Glue Traps (Offences) Act 2022 took effect on 31 July 2024. Defra has clarified that fees will only be charged if a licence is granted. BPCA believes the current scheme is impractical and rushed, with limited consultation and only six weeks before implementation.

The General Election has further complicated matters, making it harder for us to influence government decisions. Ian Andrew remarked, "We'll continue to try and make this licensing scheme as workable as possible. However, the election has made it even more difficult to influence policy decisions or get the ear of a minister".

Your help is needed

We urge our members and affected parties to report any issues encountered with the glue board licensing scheme. Your feedback is crucial in helping us address these concerns effectively. We are committed to advocating for a more practical and balanced licensing scheme that ensures public health is not compromised.

The debate over glue board licensing highlights the broader issue of regulating pest control measures. There needs to be a balance between protecting public health and animal welfare. As new regulations come into effect, we at BPCA remain dedicated to representing the pest management industry's needs and ensuring public health is our top priority.

A manifesto for pest management

Ahead of the recent election, BPCA launched its manifesto detailing our policy demands of the next government.

BPCA Chief Exec Ian Andrew said: "Our manifesto is the culmination of many months of work. Our member volunteers were asked, 'What should our 'key asks' be of the next government?'.

"Together, we created this policy document to get politicians to engage with pest management in order to help us to continue to protect public health and safety."

The manifesto contains briefing documents, policy recommendations, and

key stats designed to introduce politicians, civil servants, and stakeholders to pest management.

Ian continued: "The manifesto sets out four policy areas for protecting people from the disease, destruction, and distress pests can cause.

"They champion the professionalism of BPCA members and to protect the toolkit of the entire sector.

"Thank you to all the members who have contributed to this enormous project. We look forward to reporting on our progress."

POLICY ON A PAGE...

The full Manifesto is now available to download on the BPCA Policy section of the website.

bpc.org.uk/policy

"...we created this policy document to get politicians to engage with pest management..."





Time to get serious about pest management!

We want the UK government to commit to prioritising public health and reducing the distress caused by inadequate pest control.

The British Pest Control Association (BPCA) asks politicians to support four key actions:

1 PROTECT HOMES FROM PESTS

- Some renters and Homeowners are living with entirely preventable pest infestations, making them ill and miserable
- Lazy landlords can leave tenants open to infestation through poor maintenance, slow action on repairs and inadequate waste management facilities
- Buyers and renters have no way to objectively understand pest risks associated with a property
- There is no national standard for protecting homes from pest ingress.

Develop a PestSafe scheme to proactively keep homes pest-free. Make the scheme mandatory for landlords and social housing. Encourage homeowners to demand PestSafe reports before they purchase a property.

2 INNOVATE THROUGH CHEMICAL REGULATION

- Pests are managed with a mix of physical and chemical control methods
- Professional public health pesticides are niche products with a limited UK market
- Chemical regulation post-Brexit means products must go through GB Biocidal Products Regulation (GB BPR) effectively meaning manufacturers have to pay twice to supply the same product in Europe and GB
- GB BPR costs a similar amount to EU REACH for a smaller market, limiting new products and innovation
- Westminster, Holyrood and the Senedd have all restricted physical control measures with legislation.

Reassess GB BPR fee structure to ensure new and existing products are available to protect public health. Review chemical regulations to encourage innovation rather than hinder it.

3 RESTRICT THE PROFESSIONAL TOOLS TO PROFESSIONAL USERS

- Pest management work is largely unregulated
- Public health pesticides have the potential to harm wildlife, birds of prey, aquatic life, pets and human health
- Pest control products can have serious animal welfare concerns when used incorrectly
- Dangerous professional-use pesticides and traps can be accessed with little to no training
- Individual licensing schemes exist for certain products, but not for individual pest professionals
- Many pest management companies choose to self-regulate by becoming BPCA members.

Require professional pest controllers to be licensed to practice. Set a licensing standard equivalent to the voluntary standards that 80% of the sector already adheres to.

4 DRIVE THE TRUSTMARK SCHEME

- All government estates require some element of public health pest management
- Government already has an approved scheme for quality pest control companies: TrustMark
- Council homes, hospitals, prisons and government buildings do not universally require TrustMark businesses (where available)
- Improve consumer confidence in tradespeople by championing TrustMark
- 80% of all pest management work is carried out by a TrustMark registered company.



Specify that all government-controlled estates must choose a TrustMark registered pest management company, wherever possible.

By making decisive policy decisions regarding pest management, governments can make a real-world contribution to the protection of public health and safety in and around homes and businesses.

bpc.org.uk/policy

FREE CPD EVENTS AND WEBINARS

Event type **Webinar – Members only**  **Local forum** **Virtual forum**

Name	When?	CPD	Sponsor
DIGITAL 26: Unusual pests	14 August	3	PestFix
ONLINE roundtable - Step to success	22 August		
Controlling rats in drains	4 September	1	
ONLINE roundtable - Step to success	10 September		
BELFAST	18 September	5	1env
ESSEX - networking event	2 October		
Controlling rats in homes	9 October	1	
DIGITAL 27: Starting your pest control journey	16 October	3	Killgerm
ONLINE roundtable - Step to success	23 October		
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5pm – 21/11

Name	When?	CPD	Sponsor
ONLINE roundtable - Step to success	6 November		
Controlling rats in flats and HMOs	13 November	1	
ONLINE roundtable - Step to success	18 November		
LEEDS	27 November	5	Killgerm
ONLINE roundtable - Step to success	2 December		
Delivering pest awareness training	4 December	1	
DIGITAL 28	11 December	3	Bell Labs
ONLINE roundtable - Step to success	18 December		

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ASK THE TECHNICAL TEAM

Should I refrigerate the pesticides in my hot van?

All product labels and safety data sheets will tell you how to store each and every product.

Liquid insecticide labels vary in detail. Some mention avoiding frost, and some refer to maximum temperatures. A few say a maximum of 35°C is best for the environment. In short, excessive heat can cause some pesticides to become less effective.

Pesticides should be stored as stable as possible. On days when you feel your storage may reach excessive temperatures, try to keep it aerated. Some rodenticides, especially those in caulking tubes, can be vulnerable to higher temperatures, so again, keep them stable in whichever way you can.

A fridge may be excessive but you may be tempted to get one just to keep your drinks cold!

What should I do if I disagree with an auditor that has given incorrect advice to my client?

As a professional and qualified pest manager, you have a right to ask further questions and 'appeal' decisions or reports from an auditor of a specification.

But, it is always best to keep a friendly and positive attitude when asking questions.

Ask them to explain their position a little better so that you can then implement any necessary actions. Give full accounts of your concerns and why you are asking for this extra information. Make the interaction collaborative; after all, everyone is there to improve things!

As a last resort (and if you're a member), you can ask BPCA to help back you up if your efforts are falling on deaf ears.

Can I force customers to close if they have a bad pest problem?

No. You can advise the customer about what could happen and try to prevent any closures. After all, we are here to provide this service and help protect the business from such possibilities.

If your customer has a food business, then usually an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) would audit the site and potentially close it temporarily to address specific food safety issues, such as the presence of pests. However, as an adviser to your customer, you may feel that it'd be beneficial for the site to 'close' while you focus on a treatment plan, so present this as a discussion rather than an enforceable order.

As a BPCA member, what are the requirements for BRC audited sites or does the assessment suffice?

In many cases, an auditor will look for membership of an association as part of their compliance checks. But this won't be their only approach to ensuring you are doing a good job for your customers.

In our opinion, the first step is to ensure you have an excellent site folder (electronic or paper). The more up-to-date and detailed a folder, the better for an auditor! A well-presented and comprehensive 'folder' will demonstrate care, attention and professionalism from the start.

We have loads of template documents in the member library, so take a look for inspiration there. And BPCA has created a guidance document on the BRC food safety specification that explains each section of the standard that applies to pest management. If you are a member, login and download it!

bpca.org.uk/library

Once I run out of Ficam D, what are the alternatives for controlling wasps?

You should speak to your supplier, so they can go through all of the options available.

We may need to approach wasp treatments a little differently, and even price in the possibility of needing to do follow-ups.

The general advice from BPCA is to treat each wasp nest on a case-by-case basis. If safe to do so, accessing the nest and directly 'injecting' a treatment

is always going to be the most effective way to control them.

If you have safe and appropriate access to the nest, you may even consider non-chemical methods, such as freeze sprays. Just be safe!

Even if you've not run out of a certain product, this is the year to experiment with the treatments you offer to prepare for next summer.



Are you a BPCA member with a technical question? Get in touch...

technical@bpca.org.uk
01332 294 288
twitter.com/britpestcontrol



WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

The members of our technical team are happy to come out to visit sites with BPCA members who are struggling with a tough infestation and need hands-on advice. Get in touch!



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BPCA Technical Manager Natalie Bungay investigates pest control PPE, providing an important refresher for readers.

It can be frustrating, being smothered in 'bubble wrap' as an adult but, in an industry with diverse, potentially dangerous environments, ensuring safety is paramount. The red tape is there to protect us so that we can go home safe and well at the end of every day.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) and respiratory protective equipment (RPE) are crucial measures we should take to protect ourselves.

Both play vital roles in safeguarding pest professionals from various hazards. And if you manage a staff team, encouraging the correct use of these will foster a culture of safety and compliance and keep you on the right side of the law!

But, before we discuss PPE and RPE further, you need to understand one key principle: these are the options of last resort.

MASK ON, MASK OFF

PPE AND RPE FOR PEST MANAGEMENT PROTECTION

/continued...



An online CPD quiz based on this feature is now available on the BPCA website. BPCA Registered members and affiliates can take a CPD quiz at any time bpc.org.uk/find-cpd or sign up at bpc.org.uk/affiliate

MASK ON, MASK OFF

“Spraying liquid insecticides became a much smaller part of our jobs, negating the need to wear RPE at all!”

COSHH risk hierarchy

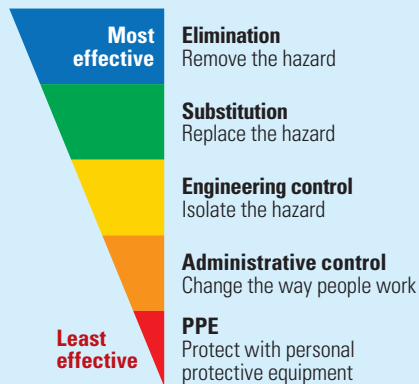
As a health and safety buff, I love a good risk hierarchy. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) risk hierarchy is the guide for good practice for reducing risk when carrying out pest control.

Examples of the risk hierarchy in action:

- Substitution control: swap high ladders for surveys for a drone survey
- Engineering control: ant and cockroach gel baits; lance applicator for aluminium phosphide for mole tunnels; ready-to-use, pre-mixed insecticide
- Administrative control: implementing non-chemical pest management, eg recommend waste removal to reduce flies and thereby remove the need for chemical treatment.

Over the years, we have seen some significant advances in product formulation in pest management. We now have more advanced options and safer application techniques.

Think of ant and cockroach gel baits, for example. The introduction of this delivery method and formulation made things so much safer for the pest technician and, in turn, the customer. Spraying liquid insecticides became a much smaller part of our jobs, negating the need to wear RPE at all!



The change from spraying to using gel baits would come under the substitution and engineering control of the hazard. The insecticide used, and the delivery method are now substituted for a safer delivery method, and the application gun and gel tube isolate the user from the insecticide almost completely – perfect!

WHAT IS PPE?

Personal protective equipment (PPE) encompasses a wide range of gear designed to protect pest managers from physical, chemical, biological and ergonomic hazards. Types of PPE vary depending on the industry and the specific risks involved.

Head – helmets, bump caps and hard hats protect against head injuries from falling objects or accidental bumps. These are important for spaces such as attics (bump risk) and construction sites. If you are installing bird netting on a roof, head protection is a must.

Eyes – safety glasses, goggles and face shields prevent injuries from flying particles, chemical splashes and intense light. We may also use these when, for example, cleaning and clearing bird fouling.

Hands – gloves protect against chemicals, cuts, abrasions and thermal hazards. Different levels of protection will be needed depending on the task at hand. Bait box checking may just require a good pair of disposable gloves, but spraying and fogging will require a tougher material to prevent chemical absorption.

Feet – safety boots and shoes prevent injuries from falling objects, punctures and slips. If you're onsite doing a survey or working for a client, they may require you to wear safety boots as per their own risk mitigation strategies.

Body – overalls, aprons and protective suits shield against chemical splashes, hot surfaces and biological agents. Bee and wasp suits with veils should form a big part of a pest manager's equipment!

“Using PPE and RPE is not just a best practice but often a legal requirement. Regulatory bodies like the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) mandate specific PPE standards to ensure workplace safety.”

WHAT IS RPE?

Respiratory protective equipment (RPE) is a subset of PPE specifically designed to protect the respiratory system from inhaling hazardous substances. RPE is crucial in environments where workers are exposed to dust, fumes, vapours and gases that can cause respiratory illnesses or exacerbate existing conditions.

As pest professionals often use dust formulations or even fumigants, RPE is an incredibly important piece of safety equipment.

Disposable respirators, often known as dust masks, are used for protection against particulates.

Half-face respirators provide a higher level of protection against dust, fumes and mists.

Full-face respirators offer protection for the entire face, used in environments with toxic gases and vapours.

Powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs) use a battery-powered blower to filter contaminated air.

Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) is used in highly hazardous environments, providing air from a tank.

SELECTION AND USE

Selecting the appropriate PPE and RPE involves a thorough risk assessment to identify potential hazards. Employers (or you, if you're self-employed) must ensure that the equipment fits well, is comfortable, and is suitable for the specific tasks and environmental conditions.

Training – workers must be trained on the correct use, maintenance and limitations of PPE and RPE. This includes proper donning and doffing techniques, and recognition of when equipment needs replacement.

Maintenance – regular inspection and maintenance of PPE and RPE are critical. Damaged or worn-out equipment can fail to provide adequate protection.

Fit testing is essential for RPE to ensure a proper seal and effective protection. This is particularly important for respirators which must form a tight seal around the nose and mouth. Each individual's face shape, including facial hair, needs to be considered. If appropriate RPE cannot be obtained, workers must not be put to work where it is required to protect their health.

Challenges and considerations

Despite the clear benefits, there are challenges associated with the use of PPE and RPE.

Comfort and usability – uncomfortable or cumbersome equipment can discourage use. Balancing protection with comfort is essential to ensure compliance.

Cost – high-quality PPE and RPE can be expensive, but investing in safety can reduce the overall costs associated with workplace injuries and illnesses.

Cultural and behavioural factors – encouraging consistent use of PPE and RPE requires fostering a safety culture within the organisation. This involves leadership commitment and continuous education, and leading by example!

Importance of PPE and RPE

The primary importance of PPE and RPE lies in their ability to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses. By providing a barrier against hazards, they ensure that workers can perform their tasks safely and efficiently.

PPE and RPE are integral to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. By understanding their importance, selecting the right equipment, and ensuring proper use and maintenance, you can be protected effectively and reduce workplace risk.

Regulatory compliance

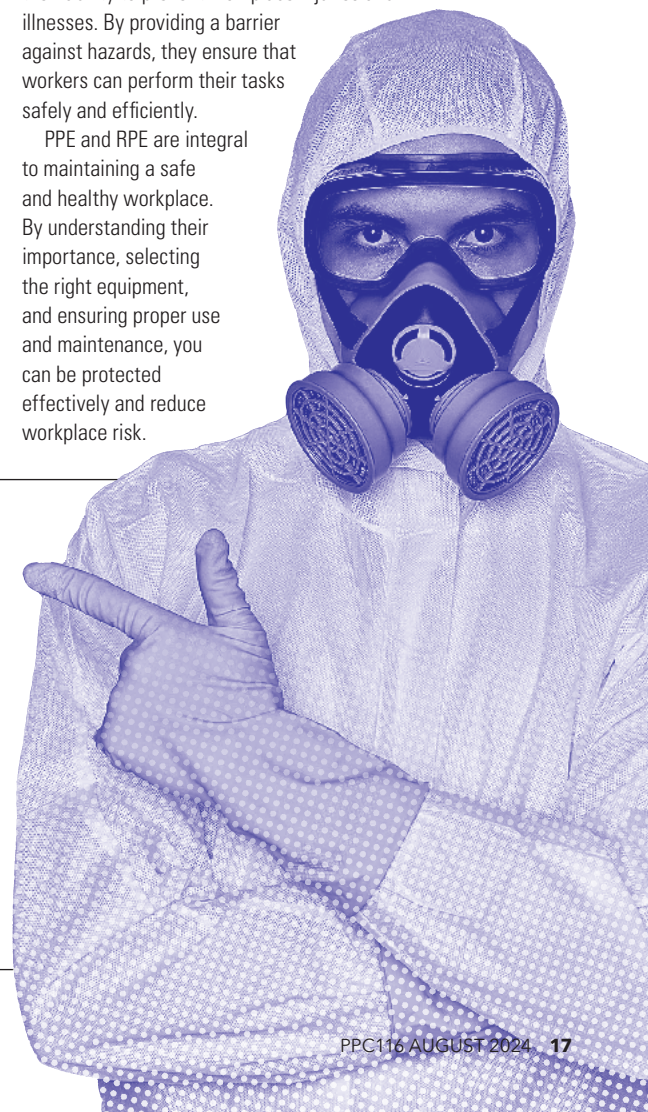
Using PPE and RPE is not just a best practice but often a legal requirement. Regulatory bodies like the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) mandate specific PPE standards to ensure workplace safety.

This is facilitated through legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASWA). Employers are legally required to provide employees with the appropriate PPE and RPE, ensure maintenance, and not make employees pay for said equipment. Employees have a responsibility to follow their employer's instructions to use PPE and RPE.

Health – proper use of PPE and RPE can prevent acute injuries and long-term health issues, such as respiratory diseases, skin conditions and hearing loss.

Productivity and morale – a safe working environment boosts employee morale and productivity. Workers who feel protected are more likely to be engaged and committed to their roles.

Moral responsibility – nobody wants to experience injury or illness, or allow this to happen; the provision of PPE and RPE ensures adherence to proper ethical and moral responsibilities.



FORECAST: FINES ALL OVER

HSE REPORTS ON
HEALTH AND SAFETY
PROSECUTIONS IN THE UK

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) published its annual statistics together with a list of the top ten health and safety prosecutions of 2023. They present some harrowing reading, with deep personal implications for the people involved – topped off with a large dose of fines for those found failing their responsibilities. These fines demonstrate the serious financial consequences of failing to meet H&S obligations, which leads to fatalities and life-changing injuries. As an employer, it's imperative to ensure health and safety standards are maintained.

£10m

The highest fine of 2023 went to Transport for London (TfL) following the Croydon tram disaster. Alongside this, Tram Operations Ltd was issued a fine of **£4m**.

£3.5m

Morrisons fined for failing to safeguard an employee with epilepsy, who died after falling from a stairway.

£6.7m

Network Rail was fined following the Stonehaven derailment in 2020, which caused three deaths.

£2.2m

Combined fine on two major transport companies after a man was hit with a heavy goods vehicle.

£2.25m

SERCO fined for breaching H&S obligations after the death of a custody officer.

£3.5m

Waste management firm fined after two workers died in separate incidents.

£1.2m

Network Rail fined after a man was crushed to death while performing maintenance work.

£1.275m

Birmingham company fined after a maintenance worker was crushed to death at a quarry in Leicestershire.

£1.4m

Cider manufacturer fined after a man was struck and killed by a security barrier.

£1.6m + jail

In Birmingham, two directors jailed after wall collapse killed five; both companies issued a combined fine.

2m

Work days lost due to work-related illness and injuries.

8m

People suffering from work-related illness and injuries.

£20.7bn

Estimated cost for work-related injuries and ill-health.

875k

Suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety.

473k

Cases of work-related musculoskeletal conditions.

61k

Workers sustained work-related injuries.

60.65k

Injuries to workers reported under RIDDOR.

2,268

Cases of mesothelioma (asbestos-related deaths)

135

Workers killed in work-related accidents.



Health and safety advice line and template library for BPCA members

BPCA's Quest health and safety service ensures your business fully complies with health and safety regulations. This is a requirement for all companies, regardless of size. BPCA Quest offers an easy and convenient solution for those needing in-house expertise or looking to benchmark their internal resources.

Additionally, the health and safety service can provide valuable support for SMEs in maintaining compliance with health and safety standards.

What's included?

- BPCA Quest H&S advice line
- Talk to an experienced health and safety specialist for any queries or guidance on finding documents
- BPCA Quest website – bpa.questcover.com
- Use over 130 health and safety template documents, which cover all the core documents and a health and safety policy.
- One-to-one meetings – questcover.com/121
You can book a health and safety 'health check' with an adviser.



“These fines demonstrate the serious financial consequences of failing to meet H&S obligations, which leads to fatalities and life-changing injuries.”

MEET THE TECH

OUR USAGENT

Stuart Blair works for BPCA member company Graham Pest Control and attended the first-ever Rodent Academy in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. Here, we talk a bit about his career in pest management and what he learned during his trip.

PPC You've been working in pest control for some time now. How did you first enter the industry?

SB After leaving college, I worked as a draughtsman in the construction industry. Unknowingly, this gave me a good start in pest control, as I had some knowledge of building and structural issues that pests could exploit.

Later, I was working as a temporary worker with a local authority. Due to a callout for black ants within the office, I happened to have a conversation with one of the council pest control technicians, who told me all about his working week.

As a young man, I was interested in the outdoors and country pursuits, getting involved in the sports and activities within this area. I have always had an interest in that way of life. From then on, I wanted to find out more. That was the start of me researching a career in pest control.

PPC What first attracted you to pest control?

SB I think, at first, it was the excitement of working outdoors, escaping the office environment and knowing that each day would be different.

The problem-solving of large infestations of rodents and insects continues to give me that same buzz.

PPC You seem to specialise in dispatching rodents with air weapons – like a pest control sharpshooter! Would you say that's accurate?

SB Yes, to some extent, but I have a strong interest in all methods of non-toxic pest control. Shooting and trapping are huge parts of that.

I got into shooting when I was nine with my grandad (aka Pop Tosh). He was a major influence on me. He gave me the opportunity to experience the benefits of outdoor pursuits and spend time with Mother Nature. He also gave me my first air rifle, which I still have to this day.

Nowadays I can use my shooting skills as part of an integrated pest management (IPM) approach. When dealing with a major infestation of rats, the most appropriate solution for removing them must be chosen.

First and foremost, you must get the customer on board with your recommendations, such as rotating waste stock and gaining access to voids and areas where rats are nesting. Environmental management helps remove the sources of food and habit, solving the problem long term.

PPC You're quite well-travelled, having been to Washington and Florida on trips where you collaborated with other pest controllers. Can you tell us about each of those trips and how you got in touch with international pesties?

SB Yeah, I have been on a few trips to America. I have been out with Scott and Angie Mullaney, who run a pest control company called UNIQUE Pest Management. They specialise in using specially trained and certified canine teams to provide rat detection and abatement, mouse and bed bug detection services.

I have known Scott for many years. He and his wife, Angie, have been very supportive of me over the years.

This year, I received an absolutely unbelievable invitation to attend a conference in the USA where Scott Mullaney and Bobby Corrigan presented non-toxic solutions to rodent issues. I also headed to the streets of Boston to carry out rat removal with his canine pest detection team.

Florida presented an amazing experience. While on a pest control job using air rifles in and around the Miami suburbs, I made contact with a couple of YouTubers called Raj the Iguana Man and Iguana Ninja. I also run a YouTube channel dedicated to pest control using air rifles and night vision/thermal technologies to remove rats from appropriate sites where this type of treatment is possible.

Consequently I spent a whole day driving around Miami dispatching iguanas from golf courses and the storm drainage systems throughout the city limits.

PPC The Rodent Academy with Bobby Corrigan must have been really interesting. We've had him on a BPCA Forum before and he's a fantastic speaker. How was the conference?

SB Spending time with Bob Corrigan was absolutely brilliant! The knowledge that man has and was sharing regarding rodent behaviour was truly amazing.

City management is key to urban rodent control. They understand that the government and local authorities must have a long-term strategic plan to tackle rodent problems. Pest management is being taught to all levels of city and university staff to better understand why proofing and waste management are very important.

We discussed why we should focus more on non-toxic solutions like trapping, carbon dioxide gassing, and canine detection and removal teams alongside the conventional use of rodenticides.

I came away feeling like everyone was willing to help each other achieve a better solution to city issues.

Want to be interviewed by PPC?

We're always looking for members to tell their stories in PPC magazine. If you have an interesting journey to share, let us know!

hello@bpca.org.uk



EFFECTIVE
STRATEGIES FOR
ENSURING LONE
WORKER SAFETY

I AIN'T GOT

Lone working is a common yet often overlooked aspect of the modern workforce. We asked the BPCA Quest team to provide us with guidance on how to ensure lone worker safety for pest professionals.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those who work by themselves without direct supervision. Lone workers are essential for various sectors and industries, including pest control. This doesn't necessarily mean they're isolated; they could work in close proximity to the public but still not receive immediate support from their colleagues or supervisors.

With an estimated 22% of the UK working population fitting into this category, understanding and mitigating the risks associated with lone working is critical. The annual British Crime Survey has also highlighted a troubling statistic – up to 150 lone workers are physically and verbally abused on a daily basis, making it imperative for employers to take serious measures to protect their staff.

Who are lone workers?

Lone workers are found across a multitude of industries and roles. They include:

Premises-based workers are those who work alone in environments such as units, workshops, factories, warehouses, offices and leisure centres.

Despite being within a controlled setting, the absence of colleagues poses serious risks.

Remote workers

that work from home represent a significant portion of lone workers. Their isolation can lead to unique challenges, including ergonomic risks and a lack of immediate support.

Mobile workers such as engineers, construction workers, estate agents, postal workers, domestic carers and cleaners often work away from a fixed base, facing varied environments and potential hazards.

Out-of-hours workers, for example, security guards, are particularly vulnerable due to the times and locations of their duties, often in environments that are not secure.



What are the risks?

Lone workers face a range of risks – many of which are heightened by the solitary nature of their working conditions. These are:

Physical and verbal assault

Workers who are alone – especially those interacting with the public or performing tasks that cause disruption, are at an increased risk of physical and verbal abuse. Road maintenance and utility workers often encounter hostility from the general public.

Medical emergencies

If a lone worker faints, becomes unconscious, or experiences a sudden illness, the absence of colleagues can delay critical medical intervention.

Accidents

Lone workers are at risk of work-related accidents, road incidents or slips, trips and falls. The lack of immediate assistance can exacerbate the severity of these incidents.

The case of Suzy Lamplugh, an estate agent who disappeared in 1986 after meeting a prospective client alone, underscores the extreme dangers lone workers can face. Her unsolved case remains a sobering reminder of the risks and vulnerabilities posed by lone working situations.



BPCA Quest

Expert guidance

Protecting the safety and wellbeing of lone workers is not just a legal obligation but a moral one, too. By implementing robust policies, frequent risk assessments, adequate training options and consistent support, employers can create a safer working environment for lone workers.

Through our partnership with Quest Cover, BPCA members receive expert services in HR, health and safety, and employment law – all provided at no additional cost through your membership. From tailored advice on managing lone

worker safety to ensuring regulatory compliance and creating a culture of safety and support, gain peace of mind with professional guidance from our experts.

For more information on how to safeguard your lone workers, call the HR and Employment Advice Line Service for free on 0116 243 7675. Alternatively, you can access a robust document library of downloadable policy templates at bpca.questcover.com

Together, we can create a safer workplace for all employees, whether they're on premises, at home, or on the move.

NOBODY!

SO, WHAT DO EMPLOYERS NEED TO DO?

Remote workers' needs

Remote workers, who often operate from home, face different but equally significant challenges. Employers must take specific steps to support these employees:

Assess home environments to ensure they meet health and safety standards. This includes evaluating the ergonomic setup of workstations and ensuring electrical equipment is safe and regularly tested.

Combat isolation by encouraging remote workers to visit the office periodically, participate in virtual meetings and engage in regular check-ins with their supervisors. Isolation can result in mental health issues such as loneliness, stress and fatigue.

Provide necessary equipment to remote workers so that they can perform their jobs safely and efficiently. This includes providing appropriate chairs, desks and proper lighting.

Train and develop opportunities for remote workers continuously. This enables them to remain connected to the organisation and up-to-date with the latest industry practices and safety protocols.

Communicate regularly with standardised routines, including scheduled video calls, emails and phone check-ins. This helps remote workers feel supported and ensures any issues are promptly addressed.

Monitor workload and stress levels of remote workers. This is achieved through regular one-on-one meetings where employees can discuss workloads and any challenges they face.

Outline emergency procedures for remote workers, such as steps to take in case of medical emergencies, equipment failures or other urgent and pressing situations.

Employer responsibilities

Employers have a statutory duty to ensure the safety and wellbeing of lone workers. Here are the critical steps you should take to achieve this:

Actively engage with lone workers

to understand the specific risks they face. This dialogue helps in creating effective safety measures tailored to individual needs and circumstances.

A comprehensive lone working policy should include your business's commitment to safety, identification of those at risk, potential hazards, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. It should also outline accident reporting procedures and emergency contacts.

Provide training and support is crucial for lone workers. This includes training in conflict resolution, safety, and – where relevant, self-defence techniques. In addition, providing scenario-based training can prepare workers for potential threats.

Personal protection devices such as personal alarms, GPS trackers and mobile phones should be deployed with your lone workers. These can help them call for help quickly in emergencies and enable supervisors to track their location.

Implement a buddy system in which lone workers are paired up with a colleague who checks in on them at regular intervals. These systems ensure that someone is always aware of the lone worker's status and location. There should also be procedures for escalating the issue if contact is lost.

Conduct regular risk assessments to identify and mitigate potential hazards. These assessments should be thorough and involve input from lone workers to ensure all risks are considered.

Promoting a culture that prioritises safety is crucial. This involves regular safety meetings, open communication channels, and encouraging workers to report hazards without fear of reprisal.



“Workers who are alone - especially those interacting with the public or performing tasks that cause disruption, are at an increased risk of physical and verbal abuse.”

Mental health support

Mental health is a critical aspect of lone and remote working that employers must not overlook. The isolation inherent in these roles can lead to various mental health challenges, such as anxiety, depression, and burnout. Employers should:

Promote mental health awareness by encouraging discussion, and provide resources for employees to seek help when needed.

Offer counselling services to your workforce or employee assistance programmes (EAPs) to support those dealing with mental health issues.

Promote a healthy work-life balance by establishing clear boundaries for work hours, and encouraging employees to take regular breaks from work.

Create support networks where employees can share experiences with their peers and support each other.

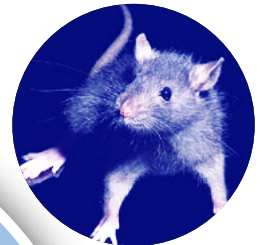
FIVE TAKEAWAYS FROM THE WILD ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE



The recent Wild Animal Welfare Conference (WAWC) brought together leading experts and advocates, including BPCA President Chris Cagienard, to discuss the future of animal welfare.

Pest professionals and BPCA share many viewpoints with animal welfare academics, and their guidelines are being implemented in pest management strategies.

Here are five key lessons we can learn from this event and how they relate to the professional pest management industry...



2

ADOPT A LESS HUMAN-CENTRIC VIEW

One fundamental takeaway from the conference is redefining animal welfare by adopting a less human-centric view.

Decisions to cull animals should be based on their health and environmental impact rather than their categorisation as wild or domestic, sentient or not. This shift calls for a change in language, avoiding terms like 'pest' and 'vermin', which some speakers argue allows for inhumane treatment.

While we don't agree that the word 'pest' is inherently wrong or justifies worse treatment, we all must try to better understand the interconnectedness of human, animal and environmental health.

For pest professionals, this translates into employing integrated pest management (IPM) strategies that prioritise non-lethal methods, habitat modifications and sometimes even the use of natural predators. Pest professionals already undertake to do this, showing that our industry already applies animal welfare practices.

1

PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Nick Collinson from The National Trust introduced seven principles of ethical wildlife management, emphasising the balance between aesthetic considerations and nature's realities. These principles guide more ethical and sustainable decisions in wildlife management:

Begin by modifying human practices

Justify with evidence

Ensure objectives are clear and achievable

Prioritise animal welfare

Maintain social acceptability

Conduct systematic planning

Make decisions based on specifics, not labels.

These steps provide a useful and easily implementable framework for how pest professionals can consider animal welfare for every site.

3

CONTEXTUAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Madeleine Campbell from the University of Nottingham emphasised that wildlife management must be contextual. There is no one-size-fits-all solution; each situation requires a tailored approach based on ethical frameworks.

This involves defining ethical questions, understanding relevant laws and regulations, considering scientific evidence and expert opinions and acknowledging stakeholder interests.

The goal is to minimise negative welfare impacts and maximise positive outcomes for each species.

The professional sector is already taking this approach seriously by staying updated on legislation, conducting environmental risk assessments and tailoring site surveys to specific contexts.

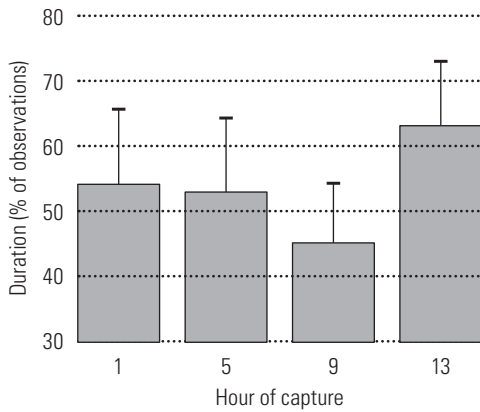


Figure 1: Percentage of time trying to escape.

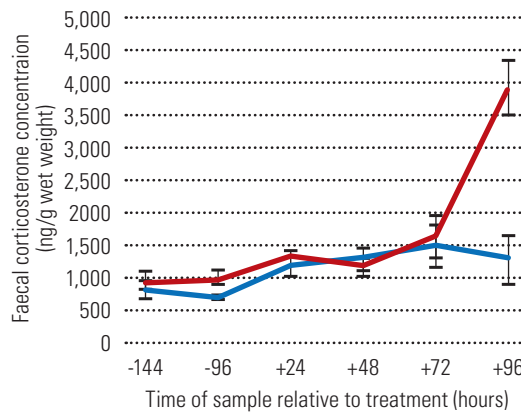


Figure 2: Stress level changes LD90 vs LD10.



4

PRIORITISE HUMANE APPROACHES

Adam Grogan from UC Davis stressed that any intervention, especially lethal methods, must be justified, effective, humane and part of a broader strategy.

Killing animals should not be the default response to perceived problems. Alternatives such as humane deterrents and habitat modifications should be prioritised.

For instance, the National Trust transitioned from lethal mole control, prioritising natural processes over aesthetic concerns.

Additionally, any lethal intervention must be continually reviewed to ensure it remains necessary and effective. For example, if moles attract rats, increasing the risk of leptospirosis, the non-lethal approach may need to be revised.

Pest professionals should discuss problem animals with customers, encouraging non-lethal control methods.

The Wild Animal Welfare Conference (WAWC) provided insights into the evolving landscape of animal welfare, highlighting the shared goals and practices between pest management professionals and animal welfare academics.

Chris Cagienard’s participation underscored the sector’s alignment with these progressive viewpoints. Integrating ethical considerations and humane practices into wildlife management is crucial.

While it might sometimes feel like pest management professionals and animal welfare organisations are at odds, none of us want to see animals suffer. We have a legal and ethical obligation to consider animal welfare while balancing the considerations with the risk to public health.

5

BALANCE LETHAL AND NON-LETHAL METHODS

The ethical and welfare challenges of lethal versus non-lethal methods were thoroughly discussed, with insights from Dr Julie Lane of the Animal and Plant Health Agency.

Translocation, or moving animals to new habitats, often results in high mortality rates and may not be humane despite being perceived as non-lethal.

Additionally, live traps can cause significant distress, with animals engaging in intense escape activity.

Poisoning, while sometimes necessary, must be carefully controlled to minimise distress. The duration of poisoning does not always correlate with distress, depending on the dose and method used (see figure 1).

Figure 2 shows that corticosterone, the stress hormone, increases slightly once a poison is ingested, with LD90 poisons causing a major spike in levels after three days. Meanwhile, stress levels taper off in animals affected by LD10 poisons.

Highly toxic poisons can cause more welfare issues and environmental risks, including secondary poisoning.

Effective wildlife management requires ongoing evaluation to ensure methods are humane, necessitating that pest professionals stay informed about new information in their toolkits.

The pest management sector has long argued that ‘humane’ catch-and-release pest control can be more inhumane than a traditional treatment option.



“...moving animals to new habitats, often results in high mortality rates and may not be humane despite being perceived as non-lethal.”

OPINION

RESISTANCE IN INSECTS

What type of insect resistance do we have in the UK? Are we dealing with resistance or treatment error? What role does IPM have in reducing callbacks? At PestEx 2024, in part of the Big Debate series, we asked a panel of industry experts to weigh in on resistance issues in insect pest management.



Pete Bowers-Davis
PBD Integrum



Rich Faulkner RF
Envu



John Horsley JH
BPCA (chair)



Avril Turner AT
Killgerm

JH Do we have multiple types of resistance in insects? If so, what are they?

RF There are four different types of resistance: 'behavioural', when insects migrate away from chemicals or don't eat the bait. 'Cuticle thickening', a genetic mutation resulting in the production of thicker wax. 'Metabolic', a genetic mutation, which means they can metabolise the chemicals, so they are no longer lethal. And 'target site', where the insecticide no longer binds to the target site, which is often part of the nervous system.

JH How widespread is insect resistance?

AT It's not as widespread as assumed. It's usually down to a key genetic mutation in the insect.

PBD We do see examples of it. We had a bed bug contract for a large national hotel chain. In the first year, we found bed bugs in key harbourage areas around the hotel, all in the same spots within the room.

Two years later, they were not to be found in those places. They wouldn't sit on the headboard or base of the bed. They were moving away from prime harbourage areas because of the pest treatment.

RF We need to be asking is it resistance to the chemical or is it the way the chemical is being used? Are staff looking or not looking at labels? Applying to the wrong areas?

If you're applying to a surface that's a higher temperature, it's going to affect the efficacy of that chemical. It's looking at the user.

How do you store chemicals? Are they even in date? Have they been in the back of your van and been frozen? Are they going to be as effective? The formulation might not work on certain surfaces.

PBD It's easy to end up taking a punt on dilution rates. A lot of it is about the treatment plan, the prep work or chemical storage.

It's also about working with the customers. You can go to a hotel to treat a room, then the customer says after you left, they gave it a good clean and wipe down, which they didn't realise will have also removed the chemical treatment – so it's not always about resistance.

JH Pest control requires such a vast amount of information anyway, but it's about getting that out there. There are all kinds of issues you may face – someone hoovering up after you've gone – there are lots of factors that can affect this.

PBD Work through every job from start to finish. When we're dealing with bed bugs, we talk it through with the customer.

But we can give them advice to wash all the bedding and clothing, then run through the treatment plan only to find they've bagged all their clothes, moved them to another room, but not got round to washing them before they've started bringing them back into the bedroom.

JH Could failure in treatments be operator error?

PBD Between us, we've only seen real resistance to a chemical once or twice. So, something else out there is going wrong.

Everybody says it's resistance but if no one is really seeing resistance at the level it's perceived to be, it's something else. It's the mixing, dilution, prep, or not understanding the lifecycle.

AT There are isolated areas of resistance – they are there, but I just don't think they're as widespread as we perceive.

Planning and using other chemicals as well – if we are using all these things, we wouldn't experience resistance because we would be killing them off without the use of chemicals, so resistance wouldn't be a factor anyway.

RF Most of it is how you're treating and what the plan is. If you plan properly it will work. We've got fewer ingredients than we had when I started. But we need to be clever with the use of the chemicals we have and use some intelligent planning.

JH Are we using things like diatomaceous earth? I used to encourage technicians to speak to other techs or manufacturers' technical people. They are the people that are available to help you with these things. It highlights areas where there's resistance. It puts a marker there.

AT There's a really simple test for chemical resistance. Put the bed bugs in a pot with the chemical and leave it for an hour. If the insects are dead, there's no resistance.

RF There is a facility for mosquito resistance and chemical testing. It can take up to a decade to get a chemical to market. So, resistance is covered in that as well. There are companies out there that will do resistance testing as well.

Talk to your manufacturers and distributors. We are here to help, we want to help, and we want you guys to be successful. Talk to other people in the area who might be rotating chemicals or who might have come across something that you don't know about.

JH Are there resistance hotspots?

RF It all comes down to the sampling and getting that data. It's not very well-mapped. 'Insects' covers tonnes of species, so it's not something that we can easily gather data on.

AT If you don't hear people talking about it and don't have this sampling coming in, then clearly it's working most of the time. However, it's definitely possible to get some that are resistant and some that are not resistant in the same population.

“The only sort of other new resistance being reported now is in house flies. There’s potential in all insects for all types of resistance, but essentially we don’t have the data.”

JH How important is IPM?

RF It’s really about being forensic, alternating chemicals, having a plan. We talk about IPM, but it should be integrated ‘product’ management. There’s not one thing you have that’s a silver bullet. Always have a plan B and a plan C.

PBD It’s so important to use different treatment methods, not just look to chemicals.

Bed bugs are the big one for everybody. We remove all the bedding in a silk bag. If we move to that, we’re taking 60% of the infestation away on the first visit. Use a bed bug vacuum.

Taping – we used to do that in aircraft. You can remove so many before you even apply that insecticide. I’ve seen techs walk in, soak everything in insecticide and that’s the way they operate.

It’s about thinking about why that treatment failed rather than immediately assuming it’s the chemical. It’s about how you’re treating and the environmental factors.

JH What about managing customer expectations? Do we do enough of this?

AT Customer education is really important. If it’s bed bugs and you’re suggesting they

wash bedding, they need to understand that everything needs to be washed at least at 60°C and that washing at 30°C means some eggs could still survive. It’s about good customer information – and making sure they tumble dry everything as well!

PBD We send out a prep sheet as soon as we get an enquiry. It includes what they need to do before and after the treatment. If the treatment isn’t successful, it’s almost always one of those things that hasn’t happened.

Questions include: When did you last de-flea your pet? We state very clearly that unless you follow that prep sheet, we can’t guarantee the success of any of our work.

RF We went to a hotel where there were tapestries on the walls. It was a nightmare. They need to do their bit, you need to do your bit. Look to the chemical, look at the dilution rate. Crack and crevice treatment – how do you work out the application rate? Are we over-applying the chemical? It’s about the planning and making sure the customers are doing exactly what they need to do as well.

JH What about strong liquid concentrates in vans over winter and summer?

RF If you have a chemical store, keep it in the building. Maximum and minimum temperatures vary from chemical to chemical. It’s just being aware of that. We can’t do much about the weather.

AT The details are always on the label. Protect from frost, ventilation, not too warm.

PBD Say there’s a sprayer left in the van overnight. Chemical separation happens, you give it a shake, but do you really know the dilution rate? Ask yourself at what step has it gone wrong?

JH An insulated fishing box works well as a bund and inhibitor or bubble wrap.

JH Is all resistance really genetic?

RF Every animal can behave in a way that it shouldn’t and some insects appear to have become a lot more resistant in the way they move and act.

Cockroaches, for example – the old gels had simple sugars in them. Now they won’t eat this. We have to use more complex sugars because the old formulas – that were cheaper - won’t be approached by cockroaches.

Proper genetic changes don’t happen overnight, they can take thousands of years. In that case, resistance is possible but unlikely.

AT The only sort of other new resistance being reported now is in house flies. There’s potential in all insects for all types of resistance, but essentially we don’t have the data.

JH What are the key takeaways? We become educated around product use, we work on educating the customer and make sure that we rotate chemicals as part of an IPM.



Do you have anything to add to the issue of resistance?

Send it in and your opinion may appear in a future issue.

hello@bpca.org.uk

BUMBLEBEE ID

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust was established in 2006 because of serious concerns about the 'plight of the bumblebee'. Founded by Professor Dave Goulson, it works across the UK to inspire the public to help our precious wild bumblebees survive and thrive. They've put together a useful guide for identifying those fluffy-bottomed bees buzzing around yours or your customers' gardens...



BUFF-TAILED BUMBLEBEE
Bombus terrestris

Queen  Worker 



COMMON CARDER BEE
Bombus pascuorum

Queen  Worker 



EARLY BUMBLEBEE
Bombus pratorum

Queen  Male 



RED-TAILED BUMBLEBEE
Bombus lapidarius

Queen  Male  Worker 



GARDEN BUMBLEBEE
Bombus hortorum

Queen  Worker 



TREE BUMBLEBEE
Bombus hypnorum

Queen  Male  Worker 



WHITE-TAILED BUMBLEBEE
Bombus lucorum

Queen  Worker 

All images courtesy of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust except tree bumblebee by Gerald Schultz, and white-tailed bumblebee by Pieter Haringsma.

OPINION

URBAN VS RURAL PEST CONTROL

A VIEW FROM THE USA



Louis Rico founded American Rat Control Inc. and has nearly 40 years of experience in rodent control. He discusses the challenges he faces in approaching different pest management environments.

Managing unwelcome guests in your home or workplace is a task nobody looks forward to but is necessary for our comfort and, sometimes, our survival. Whether it's in a bustling cityscape or amidst the tranquillity of the countryside, strategies for pest control vary significantly. The environments in urban and rural areas offer different challenges and advantages, shaping how we approach pest management in each setting.

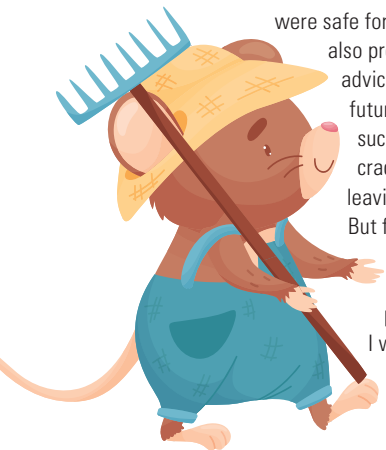
The urban jungle: there's a rat in me kitchen

City living, with its high density of buildings and people, creates a unique ecosystem for pests. From the subways below to the high-rises above, urban areas are bustling with not only humans but also with creatures that have adapted to thrive in these conditions.

I remember moving into my first apartment in the city, excited for the adventures that awaited. However, it didn't take long for me to realise that I had roommates I hadn't signed up for: cockroaches. These resilient pests seemed to come from nowhere, making my kitchen their playground. This was before I became a pest professional myself, so after some research and a few failed DIY attempts, I reached out to a local pest management service.

The professionals identified the entry points and treated the area with products that were safe for my family. They also provided invaluable advice on preventing future infestations, such as sealing cracks and avoiding leaving food out. But from then on,

I was very aware of the possibility that I was sharing my living space with unwanted pests.



Countryside challenges: pest control in the great outdoors

In contrast, rural settings present a different set of challenges. With more green spaces and wildlife, the types of pests can vary greatly. From rodents seeking shelter in your barn to insects damaging crops, the battle against pests in the countryside often requires a more tailored and environmentally aware approach.

Now, living on a farm, we're no strangers to the occasional mouse or rat. However, one year, we faced an invasion that tested our resolve. Rodents had made their way into our storage area, threatening our harvest and equipment. This situation required a multifaceted approach: we had to improve our storage practices, secure the buildings and set traps. The experience taught us the importance of regular maintenance and vigilance in preventing pest problems. It's a different beast altogether, controlling that rural rodent rampage compared to tackling rats in an apartment complex. Knowing how to do both gives you a more complete skillset as a pest professional.

Integrated pest management: a modern approach

Regardless of the setting, an integrated pest management (IPM) approach has become a cornerstone of effective and sustainable pest management. IPM involves understanding the biology and behaviour of pests, using a combination of practices to manage them, and minimising harm to people, property and the environment.

Urban IPM strategies

In urban areas, IPM in the USA emphasises the importance of sanitation, structural repairs and the educated use of pesticides. Public awareness campaigns and community involvement play crucial roles in reducing pest-related issues. For example, a city might implement a programme to manage waste more effectively, reducing rodent populations by cutting off their food supply.

Rural IPM techniques

In rural settings, IPM strategies often focus on crop rotation, natural predators and selective pesticide application to manage pests without harming the surrounding ecosystem. For instance, introducing certain types of birds that prey on crop-damaging insects can be an effective and natural way to control pest populations.

Technology's role in pest control

Advances in technology have brought new tools to the forefront of pest management. Drones, for example, are being used in rural pest control to survey large agricultural areas quickly, identifying pest infestations before they become widespread problems. In urban areas, smart traps communicate in real-time, allowing for immediate response to rodent activity.

Same same but different

Pest control in urban and rural settings requires different strategies, but the goal remains the same: to effectively manage pests in a way that minimises harm to humans and the environment. By understanding the specific challenges of each setting, employing integrated pest management techniques, and utilising technology, we can navigate the complexities of pest control. So, whether you're dealing with city cockroaches or countryside rodents, remember that solutions are available and, often, prevention is the best strategy. Through vigilance and proper management, we can maintain a healthy balance between humans and nature.



BETWEEN TWO CHAIRS: CRRU THEN AND NOW

Martin Cobbald, Managing Director at Dealey Environmental and a member of BPCA's Board of Directors, was joined by two experts from CRRU UK for an in-depth look at the organisation and its role in protecting professional-use rodenticides.



Dr Alan Buckle **AB**
CRRU UK



Nigel Cheeseright **NC**
CRRU UK



Martin Cobbald **MC**
Dealey Environmental

Retiring Chair, Dr Alan Buckle, stepped down from the helm after 20 years this spring, handing over to long-standing CRRU UK supporter Nigel Cheeseright.

The trio delve into the origins of CRRU UK and how it came to be the regulatory body for rodenticide use, as well as taking a look at the make-up of the organisation's membership, government monitoring needs and new training requirements due to be introduced in 2026.

MC Congratulations Alan on your 20 years at CRRU. What are your proudest achievements?

AB It's hard to say any one particular thing. CRRU had been going for a few months when I was asked to be Chair.

What I remember most was probably the three years of work that it took to pull the stewardship scheme together. We were talking with the three sectors that wanted to use the rodenticides – pest control, gamekeeping, and farming – and at the same time, the HSE said it didn't want to authorise these products for use outdoors, which means you couldn't use them for rat control. The HSE then authorised the products for the 'in and around buildings' use that we're all familiar with.

MC At what point did it become clear that barn owl livers should become the environmental indicator for success?

AB That was a government decision and a lot of thought went into it on their side as to how they were going to monitor us.

They chose the barn owl only because we had so much historical data on exposure in barn owls. They wanted a statistically significant dataset. They did look at other species – foxes, red kites and sparrowhawks – but none of them had enough historical data for before and after comparisons.

MC This speaks to the make-up of CRRU being the manufacturers and distributors of these products so you have the industry knowledge to put into that discussion – is that correct?

AB CRRU member companies are not allowed to share any information about volumes, values and how much is used so we're completely blind to that because there's this massive issue of competition law. It's an absolutely forbidden thing to talk about volumes.

Every now and again, you read something that gives you a feel for that, but no, we don't



Learn it or lose it!

By even reading this article, it indicates you're committed to protecting rodenticides, non-targets and the sector as a whole.

Refreshing your knowledge of stewardship and protecting non-target species should be a yearly task. Sit down by yourself or with your team, and do a toolbox talk or a bit of independent research.

For all the latest on stewardship take a look at the CRRU website thinkwildlife.org

have that information. One of the stewardship subgroups set up by the government has recognised that lack of information and has set up to look into it and see if that information can be provided by CRRU companies directly to the government, and the government can then hold that information and understand what's going on in barn owls better.

MC That seems like a tremendous improvement if that goes through. On the one hand you've got to be proactive in keeping these actives safe, but at the same time, you've got goalposts being shifted according to the whims of regulators and political headwinds.

MC So, over to you Nigel, why did you put your hat in the ring for this?

NC I was involved in CRRU pre- and post-stewardship, but I have a background in the chemical industry, with 25 years in the chemical industry giving me a good understanding of supply chains and stewarding hazardous substances around the world.

I've also had about 11 years of pest control experience working with Rentokil in its technical service area, looking after

“CRRU is composed of manufacturers that hold regulatory authorisation to sell rodenticides in the UK. Principally, it’s to represent those companies, but it also has to try to represent the three professional user groups, which are the professional pest control industry, farming and gamekeeping.”



products and registration. I retired in 2021 from full time work and I’ve just been doing things that interest me – and this seemed like a project that would fit my skill set and be incredibly challenging.

MC I’m constantly fascinated by the international flavour of what you chaps do. It would be interesting to go into what CRRU actually is, seeing as it existed before the stewardship scheme came about.

AB CRRU is composed of manufacturers that hold regulatory authorisation to sell rodenticides in the UK. Principally, it’s to represent those companies, but it also has to try to represent the three professional user groups, which are the professional pest control industry, farming and gamekeeping.

We also have a CRRU taskforce that has 35 stakeholder organisations sitting within it. Those groups meet at least once a year, and everything that CRRU does is put to those meetings, and all the stakeholders, including BPCA, are invited to attend and take part in the organisation and running of the stewardship scheme.

There are other stakeholders, such as RSPB and other environmental groups, so it tries to balance all of these things.

MC How do you think CRRU’s objectives will change in the future?

NC CRRU’s objectives are largely set by the HSE and government oversight group, and their requirements of us are to fulfil various things with regards to stewardship, so we will be trying to achieve all of those elements and stay on top of point-of-sale checks and so on.

There are two fairly big changes that have already been announced, that I’ll be working on: the removal of open area use, and the new training requirements coming in during 2026.

There’s quite a lot of work behind the scenes that is going to have to take place to make sure those changes are fully implemented.

MC One of the changes is that professional rodenticide users will have to be on an approved rodent-specific CPD scheme every year.

AB Up until this recent change, CRRU has never stipulated you had to be part of a CPD scheme to be professionally competent. You either had to be a member of a CRRU-approved farm assurance scheme or have done a CRRU course and that was all.

It doesn’t really sound sensible that doing one course once in your life means you are professionally competent forever.

They then said you can either re-do your course every five years or join a CRRU-approved CPD scheme.

MC Not a lot is ever said about any comebacks for people who may be misusing rodenticides.

AB I’ve been working on WIS (Wildlife Investigation Scheme – part of HSE) data for many years. Most people think it starts with a dead bird, but WIS is equally interested in incidents of malpractice.

They’d much rather have a photograph or report of malpractice and deal with it before something dies than wait for something to drop out of the sky.

Anyone who sees these malpractice incidents and has some evidence can contact freephone 0800 321 600 or go to the website in which to put up these records. CRRU absolutely endorses the need for investigation and prosecution of misuse.

More from the CRRU chairs

For more from Dr Alan Buckle and Nigel Cheeseright, in conversation with Martin Cobbald, check out a recording of the interview, which is available at [youtube.com/bpcavideo](https://www.youtube.com/bpcavideo)

NIFTY _{LD} FIFTY



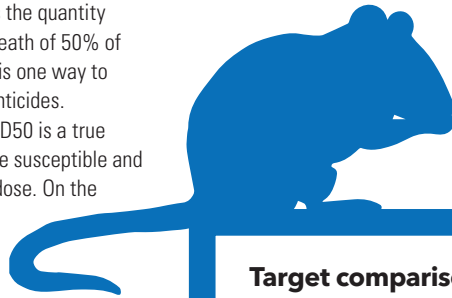
Ellen Fitzgibbons at Wade Environmental has put together some handy information to explain the purpose of LD50s and how we use them.

What is LD50?

LD stands for lethal dose. LD'50' is the quantity of a substance which causes the death of 50% of the given population of animals. It is one way to measure the acute toxicity of rodenticides.

It is important to note that the LD50 is a true average; some animals will be more susceptible and will require less to ingest a lethal dose. On the other hand, some animals will be more robust against rodenticides, needing to ingest more to inflict a lethal dose.

This is a useful metric for toxicologists and chemical manufacturers to compare toxic effects against chemicals that do not have the same mode of action. For example, one chemical may damage the kidneys, whereas another may affect the heart. Determining which is more 'toxic' solely from this information isn't feasible.



Target comparison chart with no resistance



Milligrams of >90% pure technical material to deliver an LD50 dose to 1kg body weight

Grams of bait to deliver an LD50 dose to animal of stated body weight

	Rat	Mouse	Rat 250g	Mouse 25g
Difenacoum	1.7	0.8	9	0.4
Bromadiolone	1.2	1.75	6	0.8
Brodifacoum	0.4	0.4	2	0.2
Flocoumafen	0.25	0.8	1.3	0.4
Warfarin	10.4	374	7	25
Cholecalciferol	41	43	14	1.4

How can professionals use LD50?

LD50 values can and should be used by professionals. At the core, this can be used from a risk mitigation perspective. The information can be used on safety data sheets, risk assessments and COSHH assessments.

For example, it can be used to recommend the most appropriate PPE, as well as decisions regarding handling and storage.

The comparison tables show how many grams of bait per kilo of body weight it takes to be ingested by an animal to inflict a 50% chance of death. This information assists in the selection of the most effective bait for the target animal, but also the most appropriate one minimising risks to non-target species.

Now, more than ever, we must not ignore the rise of resistance to rodenticides. Due to the volume required for a lethal dose, once effective baits may no longer be the best choices.

It also poses a larger risk of secondary and non-targeted poisoning. Take, for example, 'Bromadiolone 50ppm'. The LD for a 250g rat with no resistance is, on average, 6g. This jumps significantly to an average of 72g for an LD50 when the L120Q resistance is present.

By understanding the LD50 values, professionals can make informed choices of the safe and effective use of rodenticides in pest control strategies.

"Now, more than ever, we must not ignore the rise of resistance to rodenticides. Due to the volume required for a lethal dose, once effective baits may no longer be the best choices."

Target comparison chart modified for resistance

Resistance factors in male/female homozygous rats, as multiples of the dose of the respective compound required to elicit an effect. They are displayed by sex, then as a combined average.



TRIVIA TIME

In 1927, J W Trevan attempted to devise a method to estimate the relative poisoning potency of drugs and medicine at that time. The LD50 test – also known as the lethality test – measures how much of a chemical is required to cause death. This can then be used to measure relative toxicity across chemicals as they quantify the same effect.

	Difenacoum	Bromadiolone	Brodifacoum	Flocoumafen
Susceptible (baseline ED)	Male/Female 0.65/0.79	Male/Female 0.47/0.62	Male/Female 0.22/0.23	Male/Female 0.29/0.34
L1200				
Resistance factor	4.8/12	10/14	2.8/6.7	2.5/3.2
Bait required for 250g rat	75.5g	72g	9.5g	3.7g
Y139C				
Resistance factor	1.6/2.9	17/15	1.2/1.8	0.8/1
Bait required for 250g rat	20.25g	96g	3g	1.2g
Y139F				
Resistance factor	1.4/1.9	7/9	1.3/1.3	1/1
Bait required for 250g rat	14.85g	48g	2.6g	1.3g

Target comparison chart for non-target species

Grams of bait to deliver an LD50 dose to 1kg body weight



	Rabbit	Pig	Dog	Cat	Chicken	Sheep
Difenacoum 50PPM	40	1,600	200	2,000	1,000	2,000
Bromadiolone 50PPM	20	60	200	500	1000	
Brodifacoum 50PPM	5.8	10	5	500	200	20
Flocoumafen 200PPM	14		1.5	200		
Warfarin 200PPM	3,200	4	80	40	4,000	
Cholecalciferol 750PPM	12		13.4	166.7		

All data has been taken from industry manufacturers, veterinary studies and the Hayes Handbook of Pesticide Toxicology (third edition) and should be taken as cautionary estimates. In case of accidental poisoning, ALWAYS contact a veterinary professional.

TOP OF THE BLOCKS

HELP US
PROTECT
 YOUR TOOLKIT!

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT RODENTICIDE USE FROM 800 PEST PROFESSIONALS



As part of the BPCA Academic Relations Working Group, Iain Pendreich from member company Pest Solutions has been analysing survey data in depth so he can present the findings to PPC readers.

The recent BPCA Future of Pest Management survey sought the opinions and experiences of pest professionals across the industry. With over 800 responses, we have an insight into how we work, the tools we use and what we think the future holds.

A number of questions tackled the topic of rodenticides: what we use, how we use it, and how we stay educated. As a technician, it was interesting to see how these results compared with my experiences in the centre of Edinburgh.

Rodenticide choice

Firstly, when asked, "Do you have a choice of anticoagulants, cholecalciferol, and alphachloralose rodenticides you can use in your company?" 85% of pest controllers responded "yes", they have a choice.

As trained professionals, the majority of us can exercise some autonomy in our work, plan our strategy, and, with 85% of us also knowing how to check the resistance status of rodents in the areas we work in, choose an effective product for the job.

The majority of us get to choose our rodenticides, but how often do we use them when managing rodent populations? When asked how often we use rodenticide to manage an established population of rodents – over 99% of respondents said they would use rodenticide as part of their approach.

However dealing with a rogue intruder requires a different response. Around 10% of pest controllers are happy to work without rodenticide, and 20% of participants use it only rarely.

Whether proofing, trapping, or other components of an integrated approach, technicians use different strategies based on the scenarios they encounter and choose when and when not to use chemical controls.

Using rodenticide safely

Considering safety, when asked how we stay updated with rodenticide labels, 75% of pest controllers read the label, possibly a message drummed in during training: always read the label.

This was closely followed by 71% who prefer to receive information from BPCA sources, PPC, emails, and news articles.

30-40% rely on other magazines, distributors, and their own companies.

However, social media trails behind, with just a quarter of respondents turning to social media for up-to-date label information. Possibly, information is not as trusted on social media, and professionals in the industry prefer sources they know can be relied upon.

"How often does an environmental risk assessment dictate that you shouldn't use rodenticide?". About 40% of the time, on average, we are faced with scenarios in which we don't think rodenticide is appropriate for controlling a rodent population.

These results help demonstrate that we are responsible and thoughtful in our use of rodenticides. Different situations require different strategies, and modern pest control isn't just a case of showing up and chucking down some bait.

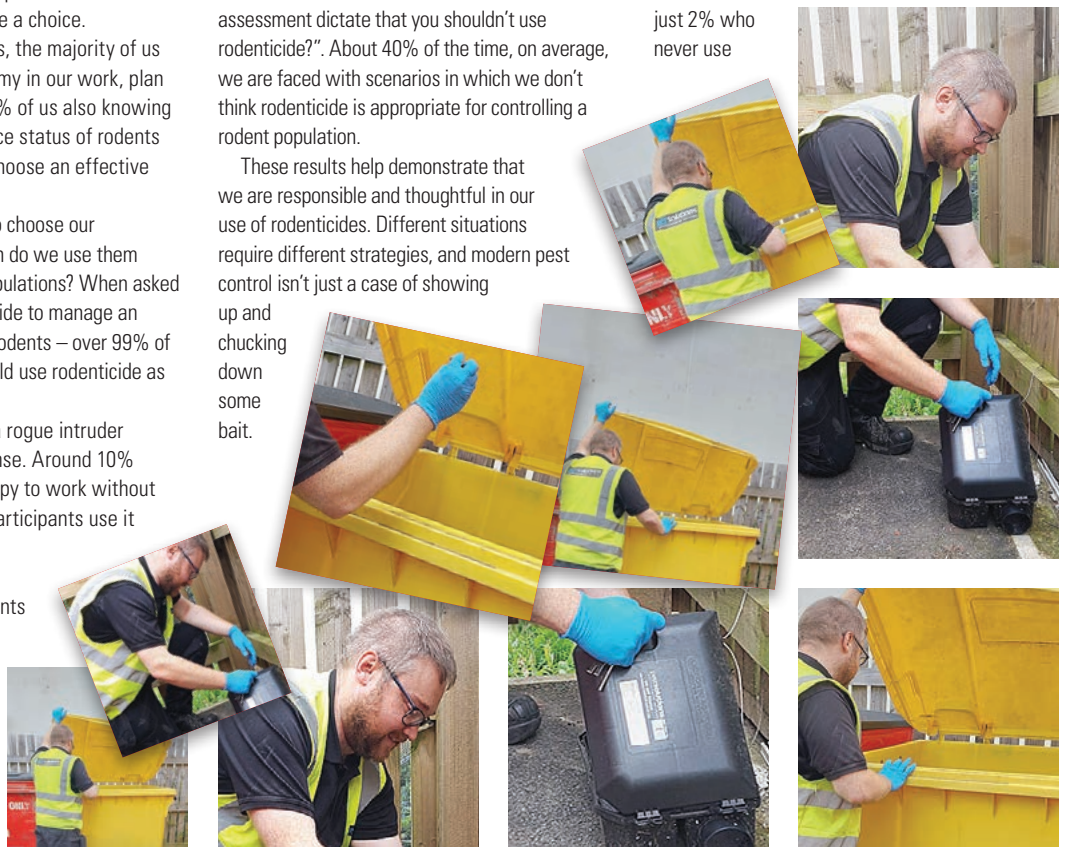
We use our training and knowledge to decide when these products are needed and when they are safe to use.

What rodenticides are we using?

There were no surprises when asked about which rodenticides we are using. The most popular option for most people is second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs).

77% of respondents would "often or always" choose an SGAR when planning a treatment, compared to just 28% who would say the same for cholecalciferol and just 2% when considering alphachloralose.

To flip it about, 37% of people answering the survey stated they never use alphachloralose, in contrast to just 2% who never use



"77% of respondents would "often or always" choose an SGAR when planning a treatment, compared to just 28% who would say the same for cholecalciferol and just 2% when considering alphachloralose."



anticoagulant products and 19% never using a cholecalciferol product.

A similar pattern can be seen when asked more specifically what we consider most palatable. Anticoagulants are considered the most palatable by a considerable margin, followed by cholecalciferol and then alphachloralose.

As a technician, when I think about these results, I can see them reflected in my own experience and the rodenticides lurking in the back of my van. I tend to reach for the SGAR first, especially when indoors in an urban setting, but I'm increasingly moving towards cholecalciferol, to which 34% of respondents, maybe in the same way, said they would also use "sometimes".

Alphachloralose sticks out in the survey results, with nearly 80% of participants having never used it or only on very rare occasions. A direct comparison with SGAR and cholecalciferol may be somewhat unfair for alphachloralose, as when used professionally alphachloralose is only permitted for use controlling mice, not rats, and only indoors.

The only time I come across it is typically in domestic jobs when I find the bait the customer has picked up at the shop, now lying long-forgotten down the side of the fridge. Mice, whether in commercial or domestic properties, can be one of the biggest challenges in Edinburgh, and here's a product designed for mice indoors that can control

resistant rodents and poses less risk to humans and non-targets... and like most of us, I've never tried it! Perhaps in alphachloralose we have an under-utilised tool that's ready for re-evaluation.

SGARs are our "go-to" rodenticides, but of the five SGARs we can use, what do we choose?

This question was asked in two variations, one considering internal and the other external usage, and asked participants to rank their most-to-least used SGAR.

Internally, brodifacoum is our favourite active ingredient – 39% of respondents rank it as their first choice. From most to least used, brodifacoum is followed by bromadiolone and difenacoum, with around 25% of participants choosing one of these as their preferred active. Difethialone and flocoumafen are next, with 5% and 3% considering them their most used product.

The external variant of the question produced broadly similar results, but due to restrictions on external use, brodifacoum was used less than bromadiolone.

Whether internal or external, we can see a heavy reliance on brodifacoum. Just thinking of my own van, I'm carrying five products of different formulations (pasta, block, wheat, paste, and contact gel) all containing brodifacoum. It works. But if all pest controllers are following a similar pattern of use, then there is the real risk that we are driving the next round of resistance by selecting for brodifacoum-resistant rodents and putting brodifacoum at risk as part of our toolkit for the future.

Much like alphachloralose, could we be missing an opportunity here?

More than 60% of pest controllers never use flocoumafen or difethialone-based products, compared to only 12% never using brodifacoum. I fall into that 60% having never used them, and if considering resistance map data for the areas I work in, difenacoum and bromadiolone are out the window.

Rather than always relying on brodifacoum, I could be rotating to products using difethialone or flocoumafen.

So, thinking of these results, I wonder if there's another aspect of our toolkit being underused and what the consequences might be in the future.

Favoured rodenticide formulations

When looking at our favourite formulations, blocks, pasta, and grains are our bread-and-butter options. It looks like we've all got a sack of grain or a tub of wax blocks somewhere in the van.

When asked to rate how often we use certain formulations, over 90% have used a block, pasta or wheat formulation at some point when controlling rodents.

But again, what we are not using can be as interesting as what we are using. 55% of pest professionals say they never use liquid bait, and 48% never use pellets. The caulked baits and contact gel sit somewhere in between.

Respondents say they are more likely to use them "sometimes", with caulked soft baits seeing slightly more usage than contact gels or foams. Maybe for most respondents, like myself, these products sit at the back of the van, forgotten behind a tub of wax blocks, only being whipped out when we are struggling for a bit of bait-take. But could there be an opportunity for re-evaluation of neglected formulations, particularly when approaching behavioural resistance?

Some final thoughts

Thinking about the theme of the survey, "meeting a challenging future head-on," whether that be resistance, changing regulations, or changes to our toolkit, I take a lot of positives from the results.

They show that, as pest controllers, we work professionally, consider the uses of our tools, and are aware of the hazards they can pose.

However, when considering rodenticides, the survey results suggest that a substantial portion of our toolkit is currently being underused. We talk a lot about the threats to our toolkit, but there is also an opportunity to reevaluate neglected resources and fully utilise the tools available to us in a challenging future.

Into data crunching?

BPCA's Academic Working Group scrutinises research to help inform the sector and make better decisions. Made up of a mix of consultants, researchers, business leaders and technicians, it's a fantastic place to deep-dive into the cutting edge of pest management. If you're interested contact

membership@bpca.org.uk





OPINION

BROADEN YOUR VISION

HOW DO WE NAVIGATE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN PEST MANAGEMENT?



Sustainability is more than chemical reduction, vehicle mileage, recycling and winning shiny awards. Paul Bates from BPCA member CLEANKILL shares his view on making the entire sector more sustainable, one company at a time.

Last year, CLEANKILL won the BPCA Sustainability Award, and last month, we won the London Chamber of Commerce Silver Sustainability Award. Before that, we had won several green awards... so we must be doing something right!

But sustainability has got to be more than just about winning awards. Sustainability is about reducing environmental impact, improving the reputation of the company and our profession, and, ideally, producing more profit for our industry.

A common statement about sustainability is that it is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations – our children and their children – to meet their own needs. How do we navigate a more sustainable future?

Three pillars of sustainability

I believe sustainability has three main pillars. Environmental sustainability covers most of what we hear about today and what most people think of when sustainability is mentioned. However, businesses also need to be sustainable.

The phrase 'corporate social responsibility' is something that all businesses should be aware of. Working with charities and the local communities helps establish our businesses and our industry as sustainable. The more socially sustainable we become – the more we become economically viable as a business.

Social sustainability also means looking after your staff – you cannot run a successful business with unhappy staff, and you should not generate profit at any cost.

We all know and understand many of the things we need to do as second nature – energy efficient lighting and LED fly units, reducing waste, recycling and composting.

We should support local communities, use local suppliers and employ staff who live close to the patches they work on. Diversity and inclusion are important for us to become economically sustainable businesses.

Sustainable working

Hawking is a highly sustainable side of the industry that has really taken off (pun intended) over the past ten years.

First used in Persia and Mesopotamia around 2,000 years ago to protect crops and livestock, it has now made a massive comeback as a means of pest bird control across the UK and beyond. At CLEANKILL, we employ several hawks, and I have never once had to refer them to our HR department. They take time off for their annual moult but, apart from that, they are very good, cheap labour.

Our foot technicians are very economically sustainable, especially when there are no train strikes. There are no vehicle maintenance, fuel, or insurance issues, no London parking issues, and they don't get fined for stopping in yellow box junctions. We just have the cost of a small store in their zone area and the occasional re-tread of their safety shoes.

Although we are not going back to flat cap and whippet pest control as many of our favoured rodenticides and insecticides are being withdrawn, we are moving back to traditional traps while modernising with the use of remote electronic detection. Now, we do much more monitoring and detection – we 'proof' – ie the old exclude/restrict/destroy method of pest control.

Of course, reducing pesticide use and meeting organic food and Soil Association requirements do have their downside.

Twenty years ago, oats, cocoa, and other commodities were fumigated either on the boats or at the ports, and nobody saw any insect life. Now, the product is packaged up, never having

been near a pesticide or fumigant, and goes into kitchen cupboards, where customers are horrified to see grain weevils, flour beetles and meal moths running amok. They then ask a pest control company to come in and spray their kitchen cupboards with insecticides.

Reducing paper

Cleankill has been reducing paper use for over 14 years now.

Originally, we used what was called a magic pen – essentially a ballpoint pen with a camera at the end that read the writing and transferred it onto pre-printed forms.

Now, all of our technicians report via iPad using Bantham Technologies reporting systems. Using this system we save, according to Bantham, over 165,000 pages of A4 paper a year, 1.8 million litres of water and 62 tonnes of CO₂.

Is sustainability just today’s ‘in phrase’ and the government’s flavour of the day? For me, sustainability is about what you believe is right and doing your research as best as you can.

To run a sustainable business, you need to employ quality staff and make a profit. The Investor in People framework has helped Cleankill by looking at every aspect of our staff – from day one in the company through the training, benefits and prospects. We have now achieved our Gold accreditation for the third time. Every business will grow or shrink, and we cannot stand still, as shrinking is unsustainable. Treating staff well means they will stay, which, in turn, will produce profit, which equals sustainability.

Awards

I encourage everybody to enter as many awards as they can. They make you look at different aspects of your business. If you win, you can use it in your marketing, and your potential clients will see you as a professional company. If you lose, look at the people who have won – what are they doing that you are not? Can you use their skills to improve your business?

The future

What will pest control look like in 10 or 20 years’ time?

Drones are being used for building surveys. Will they be able to install netting? Will remote detection completely replace the need for human technician intervention?

I remember when barcodes were put inside boxes and sold as a way of showing that boxes were being checked. I always said that the more

“Hawking is a highly sustainable side of the industry that has really taken off (pun intended) over the past ten years.”



“I encourage everybody to enter as many awards as they can. They make you look at different aspects of your business.”

important side of pest control is what is going on outside the boxes, as a monkey can check a barcode, and it takes training and experience to do pest control properly.

Will pests adapt to climate change faster than us? Of course they will. And they will adapt far faster to any new methods that we develop.

There are many unanswered questions about sustainability, and the environment is the major current talking point. But as an industry, we need to make our own businesses sustainable, environmentally, socially and economically, and I believe we need to make the general public far more aware of what we do.

We are not just a ‘distress’ business. As 2020 proved, when BPCA got us marked as key workers, no hospital or food production company could operate without a pest control regime in place.

Get involved

The British Pest Control Association is OUR Association. I get very frustrated when I see articles on various social media sites asking

what BPCA does for us. It is run by volunteers from the industry with a small central staff team that carries out the wishes of the members.

For us as individual companies to remain sustainable, give talks to anybody you can. If people know about you, they are always interested. I give talks to business network groups, women’s institutes, churches and schools. The life of grime and insects is fascinating to people outside, and we do not publicise ourselves enough.

We all have a role to play in keeping this sector sustainable – and it’s not just about reducing chemicals and mileage. It’s about the hearts and minds of our customers, giving back to our communities, education, staff retention and volunteering with your trade association.

Your opinion

PPC is your magazine, and if you have a strong opinion or want to write for us – get in touch! hello@bpca.org.uk

TESTING TIMES

BPCA ASSESSMENTS: PREPARATIONS AND COMMON PITFALLS



The assessment process can strike fear into the hearts of many current and potential members. BPCA Assessor Kristian Nettleship has put together this guide to put your mind at ease and prepare you for your visit.

Before working for BPCA, I experienced the old auditing process myself, so I know all too well the nervousness felt. Previously, the 'yes and no' formality of the audit was something that members were not used to, and feedback told us it was preferred to have a more assistive process. But a lot has changed since then.

The new BPCA assessment replaced the TAS Audit around three years ago, but still focuses heavily on the principles of BS EN 16636, the British and European standard for professional pest management. This helps us ensure that professional standards are continually met. The assessment also ensures that all of the members' customers receive a professional service, which is why they have chosen a BPCA member to carry out their pest control service or treatment.

A three-year journey

The form is a live document over three years:

- Part 1 physical assessment
- Part 2 digital assessment
- Part 3 desktop assessment.

The assessment form is exactly the same for all members, so whether you're a sole trader or have a thousand technicians, the whole process is the same.

At this point, I can imagine some sole traders are feeling a little bit worried. But trust me, from experience, it will be fine. Why? These assessments are just as much about help and support as they are about compliance.

After seeing over 330 members already, a large proportion of them have been sole traders, and these smaller members are really quite impressive.

To quote a member: "You think you are making sure everything is done correctly, and then somebody comes to look at your baby [business] to tell you it's all wrong."

In this particular case, there was nothing wrong with their business, it was a well-organised machine. But generally, if there is something that you are missing or something that needs a little improvement, we are here to help. Our aim is for every business to benefit from the assessment.

"...we are here to help. Our aim is for every business to benefit from the assessment."

Assessing to the BS EN 16636 standard

The BPCA assessment process will help you achieve the standards of BS EN 16636. Most members are already achieving this without even realising they are.

On the day of the assessment, we will review the requirements together and complete the accompanying form. You will then be sent the final version, which is yours to keep. Why not show it to your customers, demonstrating everything a BPCA member must adhere to and the professional standards you work to achieve?

"Going to a site or job with a particular problem will make things more interesting for you and us!"

If we do find any areas for improvement, they'll be followed up with a phone or video call so we can continue to help you meet the standard.

Environmental risk assessments

A common area for improvement, environmental risk assessments (ERAs), need to be completed at any point you use rodenticide externally!

We're all aware that the product label is the law. It will give you all the information about the product, like where it can be used, what it is for, and for how long. It goes on to say that this product must be used in compliance with CRRU guidelines, and it seems some people either stopped reading at this point or didn't read or understand CRRU guidelines.

This is really important. If you get this wrong, you are breaking the law. You should always document:

- Potential environmental impacts and risks to non-target species
- How carrying out the treatment could affect the environment
- How to minimise risks to non-target species
- Justification for your chosen actions, both legally and morally.

We probably all do these, but the most important part of any report is to document it! CRRU's ERA is available to download.

Hopefully, by following this process, you can answer yes to all of those questions. You also demonstrate to clients that you have a legal and ethical approach; you'll show them how pest professionals protect the world around us.

Waste management and your legal responsibilities

Another fairly common pitfall is understanding how to legally manage your waste and setting up systems to stay compliant. Here are the basics of operating in England:

- Waste, when it is generated, needs to be kept in a clearly labelled container in the vehicle.
- Waste in your storeroom (if you have one) also needs to be clearly labelled and in a suitable container.

- You need a minimum of a lower-tier waste carriers licence, and must contain the correct details. Failure to comply with this can result in a £5,000 fine. Holding a waste carrier's licence is a requirement, no matter the quantity of waste you produce.
- Waste disposal must be through the correct waste stream. It is your responsibility to ensure your waste provider knows exactly what gets collected.
- Quarterly returns also need to be completed for the Environment Agency, which is not as complicated as it sounds! Waste looks complicated and, to be honest, it is at the beginning. But, as with pretty much everything else, help is at hand via your member benefits.

Other nations

Each organisation is responsible for managing their own waste and disposing of it in line with the local legislation (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland).

It is also the organisation's responsibility to ensure that they are fully compliant. We recommend that you speak to your local environment agency for further guidance.

Guides to hazardous waste regulations can be found as follows:

- Scotland [sepa.org.uk/regulations/waste/special-waste/](https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/waste/special-waste/)
- Northern Ireland [daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/hazardous-waste](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/hazardous-waste)
- For England/Wales [gov.uk/dispose-hazardous-waste/overview](https://www.gov.uk/dispose-hazardous-waste/overview)

Tailored support

The assessment process recommendations from members are collated. This identifies where members need the most support, allowing us to concentrate all efforts on helping them be compliant in every way.

We use this information to develop member benefits and webinars delivered by Natalie Bungay and John Horsley. All those webinars are available for you to watch at your leisure.



I can't believe how many members haven't yet explored their benefits. If you've not checked for

a while, as soon as you're finished with this article, head over to [bpca.org.uk/benefits](https://www.bpca.org.uk/benefits)

On the day of your membership assessment, we'll spend some time making sure you've got everything you need and are making the most of your membership. But don't wait until then – get exploring!

Site visits

At the end of the assessment day, we will normally carry out the site visit which can be done at any time in the day.

Don't be tempted to take us along to your dullest site. Please make it interesting! The assessment visit is nothing to be worried about. Going to a site or job with a particular problem will make things more interesting for you and us!

I'm not saying I will have all the answers, but another set of eyes and an extra brain might help.

This will help make your assessment and portfolio more useful for you and all the customers (or potential customers) you show it to.

In conclusion

Yes, the assessment process ensures that all BPCA members meet a minimum standard. But it's also designed to demonstrate how fantastic you are.

Make the most out of your assessments. Use them as a business development and marketing tool. Ask us questions. Give us feedback on your membership. Tell us what you need to be even more successful.

Got questions?

Our membership support team is here to help before, during and after your assessment. If you need some support or have a question about an upcoming assessment, contact us today.

membership@bpca.org.uk

PESTEXIT

STRATEGIES FOR MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR BUSINESS SALE



With business acquisitions at an all-time high, BPCA Operations Manager Lorraine Norton provides a simple, high-level overview of strategies to consider to get your pest business ready for sale.

“Earn out usually means you stay in the business for a period of time to deliver the profitability the buyer is looking for.”

In the current economic and political climate, it's difficult to predict what's around the corner but some business planning is essential if you're thinking of selling. When you started out in business you chose how to trade eg, sole trader or limited company, and the tax consequences would have been part of your decision-making process. When considering an exit, you'll need to consider the tax consequences and how they can be minimised.

It's easy to focus on the headline amount that you sell your business for, but some careful planning can make the 'net' number (after tax) larger without necessarily having to raise the selling price.

When is the right time to sell? What is the market value of my business? Can I afford to stop trading? A good adviser (and you should definitely have one) will be able to use software to help you get to that magic number you'd be happy to sell for. They'll take into account other income you have, assets you could realise, ongoing living costs and big family events coming up.

There will also be post-sale tax options to consider – inheritance tax (IHT), reinvestment/recycling of sales proceeds and the tax reliefs available, as well as the use of trusts and investment planning – you may be thinking of doing it all over again!

When looking at IHT opportunities, you can minimise tax liability by giving away your wealth, but you don't want to give away so much that you can't afford to enjoy life in your retirement.

Different ways of exiting your business:

- Cessation of trade (sole trader/partnership)
- Liquidation (limited company ceasing to trade)
- Sale to an unconnected third party
- Succession by family members
- Succession by existing management.

Cessation of trade

Most of the goodwill value will be held personally by the business owner(s) themselves, so it can be difficult to sell on, but it isn't uncommon.

If you simply cease trading, there are still things to consider. The date you cease trading will impact any balancing allowances/charges on your business assets and the basis period on which the business profits (or losses) are assessed.

Liquidation

Liquidating a limited company is the quickest exit route, meaning the distribution to individual shareholders will be subject to capital gains tax (CGT*) rather than income tax, ie significantly less tax payable. Your advisers can run the numbers for you.

However, there is a potential trap! Specific anti-avoidance measures prevent individuals from carrying out the same trade or business within two years of liquidation.

*CGT is a tax on the profit when you sell/discard of something that's increased in value.

Sale to an unconnected third party

Questions you'll need to consider:

- Are you better off selling your shares or the assets of the business?
- Have you been offered settlement in full or some deferred consideration (earn out)? 'Earn out' usually means you stay in the business for a period of time to deliver the profitability the buyer is looking for. It's riskier, as if the targets set aren't met, then you won't achieve maximum payout.
- If you stay in the business as a director, are there any ongoing employment issues that haven't been dealt with?
- What exit planning should you do? You'll

want to ensure the business is structured tax efficiently for an exit and is attractive to buyers by not being overly complex. You should also undergo a tax health check.

Timing

In an ideal world, the right time to start

planning for an exit is from the outset of your business. Planning as far in advance as possible is certainly advisable. For some tax reliefs to apply there are statutory timelines that you'll need to take into account (see table 1).

due diligence

/dʒuː/ /'diːl.i.dʒəns/
[dyoo] [di-luh-jns]

noun, law, business

The detailed fact-gathering process for establishing a business's assets, liabilities, commercial potential and current value.

Figure 1: Typical sales process

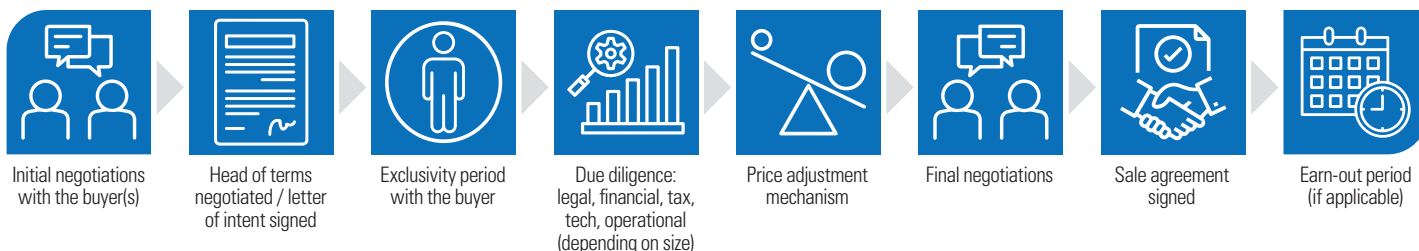


Table 1: Statutory timelines

Three years	Employment investment scheme (EIS)	EIS shareholders need to hold shares for three years to achieve a 0% CGT rate on sale. They also risk a clawback of income tax relief claimed on the purchase if sold within three years.
Two years	Business asset disposal relief (BADR)	Entitles founder shareholders or employee shareholders to 10% CGT rate on the first £1m if certain conditions are met for a two-year period. BADR applies to gifting or transferring shares between husband and wife.
One year	Substantial shareholding exemption (SSE)	0% CGT rate if shares are held in a subsidiary company for one year before sale.
Six to twelve month application process	HMRC clearance process	It's often advisable to apply for HMRC clearance for pre-sale share movements, so they're satisfied it's for bona fide business reasons and not tax avoidance.

Tax health check

Even if you're a simple company, it's still recommended that you undertake some sort of tax health check prior to a sale. This is a great time for any last minute tax planning and should identify potential risk areas or red flags that may be picked up by the buyer, which could chip away at the sale price or even damage the deal if significant.

Ensure your adviser is involved. They're best placed to identify any tax attributes that the selling price value should take into account, eg R&D tax credits, losses available and capital allowances.

Seasonality of trade and other factors can impact these figures, of course. For example:

Sales price agreed	£200K	
Plus cash	£30K	
Less debt	(£120K)	(£90K)
Plus actual working capital	£25K	
Less target working capital	(£20K)	(£5K)
Adjusted value at valuation date	£115K	

Exit through third party sale

If you're retiring or moving on to another project, you'll probably be selling 100% of your interest. If you want to retain an interest, be aware that a buyer will usually be looking for enough to give them control (see figure 1).

Typical issues with third party sale

There are numerous common issues that arise during sales.

There's often a valuation gap – what you think your company is worth will rarely match the buyer's expectations.

Many business owners are not ready for sale – their accounts are not up-to-date, or their financial systems are not robust enough to support due diligence.

Poor and/or late advice received by the seller slows things down and could mean you don't have time to renegotiate to a more favourable price.

And then there's the price adjustment mechanism, which sellers often forget to consider in advance but is essential for a fair price.

The sales price is initially agreed upon based on the assumption that the business is cash-free/debt-free with a normalised level of working capital. The price adjustment mechanism adjusts the sales price for actual cash and debt levels and looks at working capital in line with typical expectations.

Succession by family/management

Company purchase of own shares

This typically happens when you have one shareholder coming to retirement or someone who wants to step away (could be due to a disagreement) and receive value for their shares.

If the remaining shareholder doesn't have the finances to buy out the shares, then what can be done? Answer – the company can buy back the departing shareholder's shares and cancel them.

The seller's income is subject to income tax but can be subject to CGT if certain conditions are met - they must have been held in a trading company for five years and the departing shareholder must substantially reduce their shareholding.

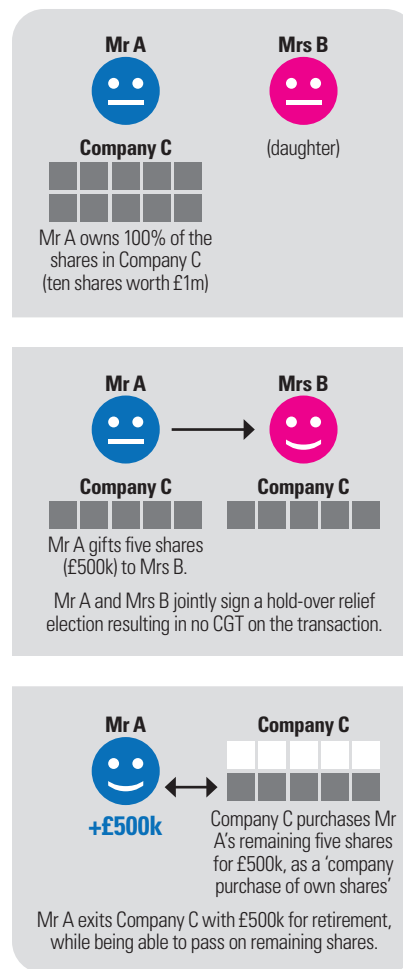
Purchases of own shares can get clearance from HMRC in advance, which gives reassurance to the departing shareholder that they would meet the criteria for the much more favourable CGT tax route.

Gift to family

Many of you reading may have built up a business that you want to pass down to your own children. This may well be how you got into business yourself, and it is fairly common in the pest control industry.

Any transfer of shares to children will be disposed of for CGT purposes. There are no tax exemptions like there are for transfer to a spouse, but there is gift relief if you jointly (with the recipient) elect to hold over the gain until they dispose of the shares later in their own life.

Figure 2: Company purchase of own shares



Gifts are great, but it doesn't help you realise value from those shares that may be needed to (say) fund a retirement. Instead, you could combine a 'company purchase of own shares' (remember the aforementioned criteria) with the gift (see figure 2).

In conclusion

If you've decided you're ready to sell or pass on your pest management business to the next generation, you'll need to consider what value you need to realise. As I've hopefully demonstrated, one size does not fit all!

Make sure you plan, plan and plan some more! Good advice is essential. It won't be cheap, but if done properly, it should achieve tax savings and offer protection against bad decisions.

BPCA webinar: selling your business for maximum value

Review our guest webinar with Jonathan Barker from Kingsbrook to learn more about getting ready to sell your pest company. bpc.org.uk/cpd-videos



PARK LIFE



Nick Burnham is Senior Wildlife Officer for the Royal Parks in London. PPC recently caught up with him to chat about his role and how pest control plays an important part.

“I took my Level 2 course with BPCA, which I just learned that I’ve passed.”

I’ve worked for The Royal Parks just over a year now. I studied Zoology, with some elements of conservation biology, at Sheffield University, and I knew that I wanted to go into a wildlife-related field.

I wasn’t a child that looked in ponds for wildlife, digging up dirt from a young age, but I liked biology at secondary school and my passion grew from there.

After university I did a bit of work at the London Wetland Centre, run by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. Then I started at London Zoo with an engagement role, giving tours and talks about wildlife, which was really useful to learn about the site.

And then I started volunteering on the keeper team and an apprenticeship role came up and I went from there.

The zoo is in Regents Park, so I was working within a Royal Park but not directly for them. I did that for about five years or so and then, as much as I enjoyed that, I wanted to venture into working with more native species.

The role of Wildlife Officer came up within the Royal Parks, which sounded perfect to me. Working for the zoo was incredibly interesting, and I got to do things like work with the primates and I absolutely loved them. But part of me realised there’s a lot of incredible wildlife in the UK, particularly the bird life.

We have some wonderful mammals, like pine martens, but I’m definitely a fan of our native bird life. My favourites are probably the great crested grebes, I think they’re really cool. We have a couple that breed in Saint James’s Park and I love their colours, the way they court one another, the babies are all stripey and look really pretty.

Royal Parks? What?

The Royal Parks is made up of eight London parks – St James’s Park, Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, Regents Park, Greenwich Park, Richmond Park, The Green Park and Bushy Park – plus Brompton Cemetery.

The Royal Parks is a charity, and has been since 2017. Prior to that it was part of the civil service. Rather than get funding from the government now, which you have to spend in that financial year, they can keep it and spend it as necessary. The bulk of the income comes from events like those at Hyde Park, such as the summertime festivals, Winter Wonderland, big gigs and so on.

The idea behind it is to futureproof London’s green spaces, in terms of resilience to climate change. It’s also about making amazing green spaces for people’s mental wellbeing. It became particularly apparent during Covid-19 how important that is. And, as capital cities go, London is really green compared to a lot of others, which I think is great.

I work in the inner parks, but Richmond Park and Bushy Park are a little bit further out and they have their own wildlife officers who also manage the deer population. They have more of a gamekeeper role too.



“There are always going to be some pests here. We have a number of cafes throughout the parks, plus we do get public feeding. As food gets dropped on the ground, some unwanted guests are attracted – it’s a never ending battle.”

It’s such a nice place to work; I’ll come into central London on the tube where it’s all hustle and bustle, then I go to the park and it’s more peaceful and lovely.

Being the Royal Parks, we are very connected with the Royals and the ceremonial events that happen, particularly where I am in St James’s Park because you’ll have trooping the colour, the King’s birthday parade etc. We had the coronation last year, the funeral the year before and the guard changes every other day and that shuts the road.

That does bring restrictions with it but it’s a unique place to work. You’ll be bird ringing or walking around the lake to the sounds of bagpipes or drums or trumpets.

Day-to-day life of a wildlife officer

My role is quite seasonal. I predominantly monitor a lot of the water bodies around the park for signs of sick and injured birds. We’ve got a lot of non-native geese, we’ve got ground nesting geese, we’ve got greylags, and a lot of Canada geese as well.

We’ve got swans, a lot of nesting signets around this time [spring] in particular.

Every afternoon I feed the pelicans that are in St James’s Park. We’ve had pelicans as part of the park since 1664, when they were given as a gift to King Charles II from the Russian ambassador.

St James’s and Regents Park also have a collection of exotic wildfowl as well, and we have six eastern white pelicans.

I look after them, make sure they’re not injured, feed them every day and corral them when they go walkabout. Today they walked into the road and stopped the traffic, so I had to go and get them back. Every now and then they leave the park, and I have to go and get them back, which is entertaining.

And if there’s an injured animal in the central parks, I tend to get a phone call.

Pest control in the parks

The Royal Parks are obviously big, open green spaces, which is a tough environment for pest control. There are a number of challenges we have to address: non-target species, water bodies, high footfall, dogs and so on.

We work with Beaver, a BPCA member, when there’s a large infestation or a difficult situation, plus myself and another wildlife officer deal with some of the smaller issues.

Beaver has been really good; helping us with a few training courses and we did a night shoot, so they let me come along and shadow that.

There are always going to be some pests here. We have a number of cafes throughout the parks, plus we do get public feeding. As food gets dropped on the ground, some unwanted guests are attracted – it’s a never ending battle.

We use a lot of methods that don’t involve toxic control wherever we can, particularly in the open spaces, although it’s not always feasible. In the parks that are able to close or have non-public areas, we have carried out shoots and things like that.

Sometimes, when you see a wasp nest or rats or whatever, they’re not necessarily a pest if they’re in certain parts of the park. A lot of times people ask me to come and destroy something and I’ll say no, because it’s somewhere that isn’t presenting a risk to anyone.

We don’t control pigeons at the moment. It’s something we’ve thought about, but given where we are, if we control a certain number a new population will just come back in and replace them.

The tourists that stayed

We also see a lot of parakeets in the parks now, they are spreading like wildfire. Maybe 10-15 years ago there weren’t that many in central London, they started off in and around the south of the city. They hit Richmond Park and Bushy Park first, but now they’re all over the central parks. They stand out quite a lot because they’re very noisy and incredibly colourful. A lot of people do tend to really like them because they’re a little bit exotic.

We don’t know exactly how destructive they can be yet, so we don’t actually manage their populations at the moment, but we try our best to discourage feeding and raise awareness about it.

It might be something we’d have to look at further down the line, to see how we control their numbers.

Grey squirrels are hard to control, but we’ve got a few islands that have really important ground nesting birds and we’ll kind of target hotspots where we don’t want any squirrels causing damage.

It’s tough because people come to parks to see wildlife. But some of this wildlife doesn’t technically belong here and can cause certain issues.

As an example, we have a very high number of geese due to feeding and that can affect the water quality of the lakes in the parks.

To combat this, we’re looking at different management plans and what we can do. That could be restricting access to the lake, adding more reed beds and so on.

Taking the lead

I took my Level 2 course with BPCA, which I just learned that I’ve passed. I could have not done it and just carried on using a contractor for everything. However there’s always been elements that we’ve done ourselves and, particularly in the last two years, the parks have done a lot more bringing roles in house.

One of those aims is to bring pest control under our banner and train other staff up too. We have a good working relationship with Beaver and would definitely still use them for some things.

But the benefit of being able to do it yourself is that we know the parks better than anyone. The knowledge of the areas and the wildlife is there and it can get complicated without that.

What’s to come?

We are aware of the Asian hornet that’s coming into the UK now. I know it’s been a big problem in France. We’ve got a few ID sheets that I actually got from PestEx the other day. We’re trying to pass them out around the parks and just get a bit more awareness on that.

We do have a biodiversity team that’s keeping an eye on the squirrel contraceptive programme that’s going on and seeing the feasibility of implementing that down the line.

And the big master plan is about making the lakes more wild. Traditionally the Royal Parks have been very Victorian. You’ve got a big concrete promenade, a square lake that isn’t really good for wildlife at all. We’re trying to rewild as much as we can which, in my view, is very exciting.

I’m also excited to continue this pest control journey as part of my role. It’s always going to be a challenge in the parks, but it’s an interesting field. I went to PestEx in March and it’s a community I’m quite new to but has been welcoming. I’ll definitely go back next time and I’ll be encouraging more of my colleagues to do the same.



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